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Rag war rages between business 'empire' and tiny charity

Michael Geisterfer

OTTAWA — In a cramped basement warehouse at St. Vincent de Paul's in Ottawa's west end, Marlene Dowd quietly goes about her business, sorting through bin after bin of used clothing, looking for quality items that can be put on the shelves upstairs and sold to a bargain-hunting public.

She is a clothes-sorter by trade and, as unlikely as it might seem, a frontline warrior in a rag war that is threatening to explode in Ottawa and across Canada. There is a fortune hiding in the used clothes and furniture which we discard, and two groups are eager to get their hands on it. The first is a powerful multibillion dollar business, the second a small consortium of charities struggling to help the poor.

Their struggle seems to some a classic David-and-Goliath battle.

"Someone's got to tell the truth about what's really going on here," says James Strate, executive director of St. Vincent de Paul's Ottawa operations. Having watched a fellow charity, Neighbourhood Services, recently close its shop doors, Strate is determined to publicize this simmering battle for public donations.

From Salvation Army to monied empire

A grassroots Catholic-based ministry to the poor and destitute, which operates locally in both Canada and the U.S., St. Vincent de Paul has seen a huge decline in its coffers. The culprit, according to James Strate: the privately owned U.S.-based giant Value Village Thrift Stores. Value Village has some 180 such stores

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MAY 03 1999



James Strate: An unlikely warrior in a rag war.

Stay-at-home parents need tax break, say government critics

Alan Doerksen

OTTAWA — A comment from a Liberal minister playing down the significance of the work of stay-at-home parents recently sparked a debate between the governing Liberals and the Reform Opposition. The Reform Party, as well as the Canadian Christian Business Federation, are calling for more recognition and better tax breaks for single-income families with a stay-at-home parent.

A few weeks ago, federal junior finance minister Jim Peterson drew criticism when he suggested that two-income couples work twice as hard as couples with a stay-at-home parent. Later on, Peterson backtracked, and told the *Globe and Mail*: "A trip of the tongue got me into difficulty. The



Reform MP Deborah Grey

role of a partner who works in the home can be even far more demanding than the role of one who has to go outside the house to work."

The Reform Party criticized Peterson's original stance as well as a new report from the government's Status of Women office which defends large childcare deductions available only to two-income families, and which suggests that tax breaks for stay-at-home parents would keep them out of the work force. The report was written to defend Canada's gender-equity record in an upcoming United Nations hearing.

In response, the Reform Party introduced a motion on March 9 which requested that "the federal tax system should be reformed to end discrimination against single-income families with children." The motion calls on the government to replace the childcare deduction with a child

credit available to all parents.

'Disincentive to marry'

Defending the motion in the House of Commons, Deborah Grey (Reform MP for Edmonton North) got into a debate with Finance Minister Paul Martin, and, according to Hansard records, asked him, "Why cannot the government just admit the obvious, that it discriminates against stay-at-home parents, plain and simple?"

Martin responded, "It is very clear that we are dealing with an issue which is complex.... In 1995, the Reform Party taxation task-force said that the family structure was a primary consideration in measuring ability to pay. It is the households with similar family

structures that would be taxed.... That means that when a lower income spouse decides to re-enter the work force, that lower income spouse will be taxed at the higher rate. It means that when two people marry, the lower income spouse will be taxed at the higher rate. What, in fact, they are talking about is a disincentive to marry."

The previous day Martin had told Grey, "It makes no sense to pit families [in which] parents work either in the home or work out of the home against each other. What is important is that the government recognizes the tremendous burden and responsibility that parents have raising children. It recognized its responsibility to work with them, which is why we

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News

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referred that matter to the House of Commons finance committee."

Grey responded: "I will tell you what pits families against each other. It is that a dual income family and a single income family pay such discrepant tax rates."

But Hedy Fry, the Status of Women minister pointed out, "The problem is simply that income tax is not the only system families depend on for their income. There are transfers to families in which the government of Canada does not discriminate against single-income families. The child benefit is a major one that assists low-income, single-income families headed by single mothers."

Overblown approach

On March 9, the House of Commons voted on the Reform Party proposal and it was defeated, even though the Opposition parties voted in support of it. Opposition Leader Preston Manning reacted by asserting, "What the Liberals are saying to parents who choose to stay at home is that they are second-class citizens who don't deserve equal treatment under the tax



Harry Kits, executive director of Citizens for Public Justice.

system. This Liberal government is saying that stay-at-home parents don't matter."

Harry Kits, executive director of Citizens for Public Justice (CPJ), says that reaction "is a bit overblown. It's more complicated than they're making it out to be."

Kits says CPJ wants to see different types of families treated fairly in Canada, with fair treatment shown to the poor, especially. "The strong evidence is that

the tax system is biased toward the wealthy," he notes.

One example of this is a recent report from the C.D. Howe Institute, a Toronto-based think-tank, which calculated that a two-income couple earning \$70,000 can claim \$14,000 in childcare deductions not available to single-income parents.

Homemakers underestimated

Like the Reform Party, the Canadian Christian Business Federation (CCBF) is calling for greater recognition of stay-at-home parents. In a March press release, CCBF executive director Hans Vander Stoep wrote: "The value of the full-time homemaker has long been underestimated. Not only has the need for stay-at-home moms been negated, it has in fact been actively discouraged as an honorable career and opportunity for total fulfilment for women."

"The full-time homemaker has now become the full-time career woman, breadwinner and business traveller. Isn't it time to level the playing field, and reinvent some traditions of days gone by? Can't



Hans Vander Stoep, executive director of the Canadian Christian Business Federation.

family values be put a little higher on the political agendas of those who formulate, adopt, and implement policy?

"Many women or men ... would be a full-time homemaker if it [weren't] for the fiscal penalties they face. Canada's tax laws need to be changed to encourage and enable full-time homemakers to be just that, full-time. We need to recognize that full-time homemakers make a definite valuable

contribution to society."

CCBF is calling for new tax legislation that will make staying at home "attractive," says Vander Stoep. "Not only may we expect a better society to be the result, we may also expect that positions presently filled by then full-time homemakers will create employment opportunities for thousands of Generation Xers."

Inspired by Peterson

Vander Stoep explains that his proposal was inspired in part by what he feels was Peterson's impulsive comment about stay-at-home parents. Vander Stoep has sent the CCBF proposal to various MPs, but has received no replies yet from the government. "I wish they'd open their eyes and say this is unfair," he asserts.

Vander Stoep acknowledges that both the Reform Party and the Christian Heritage Party (CHP) have been addressing this issue. Vander Stoep believes the Reform Party's motion on this issue was "a fair proposal," but he expected it to be defeated in the House of Commons (which it was).

Exodus studies homosexuality and change

Alan Doerksen

COLORADO SPRINGS, Colorado - Exodus International, a

Christian group which promotes freedom from homosexuality, has started an ambitious five-year

study on homosexuality and change. Heading the project will be Dr. Stanton Jones, professor of psychology at Wheaton College near Chicago, reports Exodus's newsletter.

"We feel that this study is a top priority," says Exodus director Bob Davies. "The American Psychological Association and other national groups are putting tremendous pressure upon counselors not to offer help to gays seeking change."

Exodus says there is an increasing number of unsubstantiated claims by pro-gay leaders that "change therapy" is ineffective and leads to self-hatred, despair and even suicide.

"It's time to show once and for all whether gays can change or whether Exodus should close its doors," asserts Davies.

In 1991, Jones first proposed the study to Davies. But after receiving approval from Exodus, Jones was unsuccessful in raising funds from private foundations. Several months ago, Davies came across his previous correspondence with Jones and realized the timing was now perfect to pursue such a project. He contacted Jones, who agreed to head the national (U.S.) study. Exodus is now



The North American Exodus board at their recent meeting in Colorado Springs. Director Bob Davies is second from right.

pursuing funding through several private foundations to pay the estimated costs of \$100,000.

New website

Another new initiative from Exodus is a new website, which will promote freedom from homosexuality. Exodus has hired Innovative Networks, a leading online design company, to set up the site.

The new website will be

updated from the Exodus office, with frequent news on what is happening in ex-gay ministries worldwide. It will include commonly-asked questions - such as, "Can gays really change?" - a list of Exodus ministries, upcoming seminars, media interviews, and a library for students and reporters.

Exodus's new web address will be: <http://www.exodusintl.org>.

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News/Environment

Value Village corners used clothing market

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strategically placed in malls and plazas across North America, and all of them, including the 69 stores in Canada, belong to the multibillion dollar empire of the reclusive Ellison family.

The founding brothers, Bill and Orlo Ellison, began their professional careers with the Salvation Army over 50 years ago, gathering and sorting used clothes for the needy. They broke ranks with the church, though, when they discov-

ered there was true gold in the unbecoming mass of rags and cast-offs that poured in from the donation boxes. Their strategy to extract that fortune was, and remains, a brilliant blend of marketing genius and shrewd opportunism.

"They sign contracts with local charities like the Canadian Diabetes Association and the Ontario Federation for Cerebral Palsy," says Strate, "and through an aggressive telemarketing campaign use the good names of those

charities to solicit donations from unsuspecting households."

Their connection with those charities is symbiotic. "It's not unlike a wholesaler-retailer relationship," said Value Village marketing manager Eric Farley in an interview from Seattle. "The charities provide us with the raw merchandise and we buy it in bulk, sight unseen."

Value Village chooses the charities it feels are most likely to succeed in the business, and helps

them get set-up in terms of telemarketing, transportation and offices. Value Village also guarantees the charities a profit in the first year. "We want the experience to be as risk-free as possible," says Farley, admitting that in some rare cases, charities have actually lost money in the endeavor.

'Win-win situation'

Once the infrastructure has been set in place, the charities themselves begin soliciting donations. A typical phone call asks donors to leave unwanted household goods at the foot of their driveway for pick-up by the charities' own trucks. The goods are then sent directly to one of Value Village outlets where they are unloaded from the trucks straight into the store's sorting department.

At any given time there may be 100,000 items gracing the shelves of each Value Village store.

Charities are paid per measured unit collected and can make up to \$8,000 profit a week.

The local chapter of the Canadian Diabetes Association (CDA), for example, is expecting a bonanza this year. Six of its trucks go out each day to collect donations. "Last year's profits were adversely affected by the ice storm," says CDA regional manager Anny Leclerc, "but this year we're expecting a profit of \$400,000 for Ottawa alone. We're projecting a net of \$1.5 million in Ontario in the coming year."

"Our purpose is to raise funds for diabetes research," says Leclerc. "If Value Village didn't buy our merchandise and we didn't get those funds, our activities as an organization would be seriously curtailed."

With two bright 20,000-square-foot department stores in Ottawa and a third in Gatineau, Value Village has virtually cornered the market on quality used clothing and furniture in the region.

"This is a win-win situation for everyone involved," says Value

Village district manager Vincent Scherban, standing outside his sprawling Bank Street location where Canadian flags flutter in the wind.

"The charities make money, we make money, and all of the used goods we sell end up getting recycled and not in landfill sites. Everyone is happy!" Particularly, it would appear, the Seattle-based Ellison family, and their company, TVI Inc. Projected sales this year in Canada alone are more than \$450 million (Cdn).

To whose benefit?

Eric Farley downplays the U.S. Connection. "Value Village is really a Canadian company," he says, "with stores from coast to coast. Profits from those stores go to opening up new stores in Canada. We hire Canadian employees, help Canadian charities and pay taxes to Revenue Canada. We're a truly Canadian company."

Some of the charities, like St. Vincent de Paul, which are still trying to collect and sell used clothing independently, don't see it that way. "We've lost nearly \$200,000 worth of revenue this year alone," laments James Strate. "Value Village is a huge threat. They call themselves 'Canada's Thrift Department Store', but they are doing nothing for Canada. All of their profits go straight across the border into the pockets of the Ellison family."

Strate and others in the charity thriftstore sector assert that the issue is not competition but unfair practices. "It's how Value Village gets [its] product, that's the problem," he says. "If people knew that the charities who phone them up for donations were selling them directly to Value Village for pennies on the dollar, do you think they'd continue to give away so much?"

This story first appeared in the National Post and the Ottawa Citizen and is used with permission.

The Gospel and the environment in Athens

I had a chance to speak the gospel in Athens on Saturday. Well, at least it felt that way. The entire trip was surprising, and not just because it took only about four hours, without ever leaving Edmonton.

Actually, I was at a conference called "The Environment — Seeking a Balance" held at the Unitarian Church of Edmonton. What I and my hosts learned from my talk helped put Christian earthkeeping efforts into a new perspective, I believe.

The first speaker began by saying, "Environmentalism is my religion. It is based on my beliefs, and meets my deepest needs." The old story, the Christian story no longer works for many people. They are searching for meaning outside the church.

Often at this point, we shake our heads at this disbelieving generation. We wonder what is wrong with them. But maybe it's not simply a problem with this generation, but also with the way we live and teach our story. Is it possible that when we ignore environmental concerns we are missing an opportunity to speak the Good News?

A bigger problem than the environment

In our generation we are engaged in a profound discussion about the appropriate place of human beings on earth. It is a debate that often lacks the depth and richness of our real condition. Sometimes our relation to the creation gets reduced to just one of two choices. The following headline tells it all. In a recent editorial blast, *National Post* editor Terence Corcoran said: "CBC gives Suzuki pulpit to preach gloom and doom." Corcoran went on: "In the Suzuki world view, any species is better than the human species."

I don't think David Suzuki needs me to defend him, but Corcoran's news is old. Even Suzuki has rejected the "humans are a plague" position. He has been stumping the country recently with this very message. "We (environmentalists) made a massive error," he has said. "We got caught up in this adversarial thing. We forgot that people were involved."

Our problem is deeper than either of these commentators admit. The message of the gospel is that when we human beings failed God, we not only

Creation waits...



John Wood

failed ourselves but the rest of creation too.

The real answer lies in what Loren Wilkinson called *The New Story of Creation: A Trinitarian Perspective* (Crux, 1994). It is a retelling of the gospel that is emerging from the pens of theologians, philosophers, and even scientists — Colin Gunton, William Dymess, Cal DeWitt and others. The New Story is centred on the meaning of the cross: the birth, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ.

Wilkinson says this story "provides us with a more adequate framework for the care of creation" than any of the alternative views of humankind and nature. And he adds, it is both "our task and [our] nature to understand creation: to name it, to use it — but above all to care for it." This is no uni-dimensional view of human beings against nature, or nature for human beings only.

A three-part stewardship

In "naming" creation we engage in the fundamental process of discovery. In using it we exercise proper dominion over unruly matter. From it we derive all that sustains our material lives. And out of nature we build our homes and communities. The Scriptures do not blush at the fact that we are rooted in a physical world, with material needs that must be met.

And now we have (finally) come to see that in caring for it we are called to be of service. We once thought that this service was only to other human beings. But, like Francis of Assisi, many now recognize that we have obligations to God's non-human creatures too, without neglecting ourselves. This is the steward's charge.

The most remarkable comment of that conference day came during the question and answer session. One woman said, "I might still be a Christian if I had heard someone speak like you before." Last Saturday in Athens I found the impact of this Good News surprising indeed.

John R. Wood teaches environmental science at The King's University College in Edmonton, Alta.

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Editorial

Life is a beach ... when fanatics turn 'holy'

Yes, this is the vacation issue; and, no, I'm not writing about vacations. Actually, I wrote this editorial while on vacation in South Carolina. Does that count?

While on vacation, my wife and I immersed ourselves in the history of, and war in, the Balkans (*Southeastern Europe Under Ottoman Rule; Love Thy Neighbor: a Story of War*). We focused on the destruction of Sarajevo (*Sarajevo, Exodus of a City*; also, *Zlata's Diary: a Child's Life in Sarajevo*) and watched the television coverage of the refugee tide coming out of Kosovo, and the bombing of Serbia. All of this is not vacation-issue material. But it did not prevent me from enjoying a time of re-creative reflection and walking on the beach.

What prompted me to write an editorial while on vacation was a television documentary on Arab discontent with the presence of American troops on Saudi Arabian soil. A group of Muslim intellectuals, interviewed by a Western journalist, agreed that the presence of American forces in Saudi Arabia was an affront to Arab dignity. What

is more, they thought of it as a sacrilege. Saudi Arabia is holy ground, they argued, since the two most important Islamic sites are located there: the Kaaba in Mecca and the Mosque of Muhammad in Medina (Jerusalem is the third holy site). Of course, Muslim fundamentalists are inclined to stretch the concept of "holy ground" to include all territory at one time or now ruled by Islamic governments.

In addition to calling certain ground holy, they also speak of holy war — the *jihad*. Muslims are called to wage holy wars to spread Islam and to wipe out all infidels who stand in the way of Islam. Some Muslims find it hard to practise *jihad* in Islamic countries that are at peace, said one of the interviewees. That's why they went to Afghanistan some years ago to join the Taliban in their fight to drive out the communist infidels. Such a fight with guns and missiles makes the *jihad* real, he said. *Jihad* is also the reason why some Islamic extremist groups have attacked U.S. military installations in the Middle East and bombed the World Trade Center in New York.

presence of the Holy Spirit. We don't call it a sacrilege when an unbeliever enters our home or church. We accept pluralism as a form of organizing society. We know that we live in the time of God's patience. There is no room for religious (or ethnic) cleansing in a Christian's political program.

One day, God will establish his Kingdom on earth in the fullest sense. That will be the end of pluralism, not because God will force true religion down anyone's throat, but because people will want to serve the Lord and him only. Then, everything will be holy ground and no *jihad* will be needed to make it so.

God does call us to a holy war now; but it's not a physical war carried out with guns and missiles. Christians as individuals and as groups are called to do battle, not against people, but against Satan and all his powers. Ephesians 6 calls for weaponry and armor that is not meant to harm anyone. We are to love our enemies and turn the other cheek when people hurt and shame us.

The jihad of nationalism

This brings me full circle, to what is happening in Kosovo. Slobodan Milosevic is carrying out his version of a holy war to bring about his "holy" Serbia. Except, the holiness here must be seen in the light of nationalism. Milosevic is setting Kosovo apart as a land for Serbs only. "Ethnic cleansing" replaces the religious cleansing that has taken place in Islamic theocracies.

I don't think we should blame Eastern Orthodoxy for what is happening in Kosovo, though the church seems to be implicitly guilty by not denouncing what Milosevic is doing (or are they fed false information?). The leaders of the Balkans are simply using religious affiliation as a form of glue for their nationalistic purposes (five years ago many Croats started identifying, more than before, with the Roman Catholic Church when they began their ethnic cleansing of Serbs and Muslims).

Ironically, the UN's involvement in Bosnia and NATO's involvement with Kosovo ends up aiding and abetting the nationalism of the victims. It seems that we cannot solve "holiness" problems of either the religious or secular kind with guns and missiles. This is not meant to be an editorial against NATO's attempt to halt the atrocities in Kosovo. Nor am I proposing a pacifist solution by referring to Ephesians 6. But I have no faith in purely materialistic (militaristic) attempts to stop the terribly wrong *jihad* of the Milosevics of this world. The West is too spiritually impoverished to be able to wage a truly holy and just war. **BW**

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When is ground holy?

All this talk reminded me of Old Testament times. The people of Israel were called a holy (set apart for God) people, and their temple was holy ground. The state of Israel was a theocracy and, as such, formed a holy organization of life in the land. Religious and moral pluralism was not to be tolerated in Israel. The Sabbath was supposed to be holy. And other people and things dedicated to God were considered holy. But I don't recall that the land was called holy. And I know for sure that the presence of unbelievers on Israeli soil was not considered a sacrilege by God. When Christians refer to Palestine as the Holy Land, they are not using God's dictionary for life.

Since the coming of Jesus Christ, things have changed remarkably for the people of God. The imagery of holy ground and holy war is still there, but with a difference. Christians sing: "This is holy ground. We're standing on holy ground." But they are referring to the moment of God's presence in their midst ("For where two or three come together in my name, there I am with them" — Matt. 18:20).

In addition, talking about holy ground as Christians is fine if we mean that the earth is the Lord's and everything in it. With Gerard Manley Hopkins, we give glory to God for "all things counter, original, spare, strange; whatever is fickle, freckled (who knows how?)" as we acknowledge God as the one who "fathers-forth whose beauty is past change." But our focus on holiness is especially related to our hearts and the

Letters

NATO bombing indefensible

I am deeply troubled by the horrifying war in Yugoslavia and the terrible suffering of hundreds of thousands of innocent people. I think no one can really avoid having to struggle seriously with what could possibly be done by our individual nations, NATO and the UN to stop the crimes against humanity committed by both Slobodan Milosevic and his henchmen and the NATO bombers.

Much has been reported about this bloody conflict that lacks any real rationale rooted in compassion, freedom, justice and peace. I see considerable spiritual confusion due to the ideological propaganda based on "in military might we trust."

Thank God that there have been a few voices of sanity that call for reflection and peaceful alternatives. I believe Ernie Regehr, director of Project Ploughshares in Waterloo, Ont., and Douglas Roche, an independent Christian Senator in Ottawa,

have been helpful in their commentaries and policy suggestions.

'Violates international law'

Here's what Senator Roche stated on March 31:

"The bombing of Yugoslavia must cease immediately, and meaningful negotiations (not externally dictated terms) begun, preferably under UN auspices. Only thus can respect for international law be re-established, a peace process begun, including provisions for the refugees to return home safely.

"The bombing, conducted in the name of humanitarian concerns, has inflicted many casualties, led to enormous dislocation and wrought great damage. Both Serbia's angry response and the bombing itself contribute to this horrendous development. Where does the bombing lead? No clear strategy is in sight.

"The bombing has intensified tensions

dangerously and caused divisions internationally. A U.S. poll shows that country's people closely divided. Stresses within NATO are evident and the hoped-for friendly relations between NATO and Russia mocked. Russia (and NATO's Greece) have long had close ties with Serbia. Their assistance — not their alienation — could provide a way out.

"The bombing, under U.S. command and NATO (not UN) auspices, shows contempt for and does great damage to the UN. It violates international law. NATO has claimed from its inception to be a defensive alliance. This bombing of a sovereign state belies that claim.

Canada should withdraw

"The Canadian government, at the very moment it attained an eagerly sought seat on the UN Security Council, supported — and is now participating in — NATO's

degradation of the UN Security Council by these bombings.

"The Canadian government should withdraw its forces from the NATO attack on Yugoslavia, demand that NATO cease its assault, and work to have the authority of the UN Security Council made effective in this situation. The bombing must stop now. The hour is late, the dangers great. It is the moment for courage."

We all must carefully consider what fellow Christians are advocating. Both Regehr and Roche are highly regarded experts when it comes to the life-and-death questions of peace and conflict.

I pray that God will use their professional witness and our communal prayers and actions for freedom, justice, peace and mercy in Yugoslavia.

Gerald Vandezande
Agincourt, Ont.

Schedule has reader perplexed

Re: "Making time matter" by Sharon Payton (CC, March 22). It sounds to me as if Sharon Payton does not practise what she preaches. Let's do a schedule based on the facts she presents. She says it's "not unusual to put in a 45-50 hour week, beyond commute."

| | |
|--------------------|--|
| 4:30 a.m.: | get up |
| 4:30-5 a.m.: | mediation (Objective 1) |
| 5-6 a.m.: | personal and breakfast |
| 6-7 a.m.: | on the road (husband and family asleep until 8:00) |
| 7 a.m.-12 p.m.: | 5 hours work |
| 12-1 p.m.: | lunch |
| 1-6 p.m.: | 5 hours work (10 hours total per day, which equals 50 hours/wk.) |
| 6-7 p.m.: | on the road |
| 7-8 p.m.: | makes and eats supper, unless her husband makes it or they eat out |
| 8-10 p.m.: | quality time with family (Objective 2) |
| 10 p.m.-4:30 a.m.: | 6 1/2 hours of sleep (with that amount of sleep you need 10 hours to do a 7-hour job!) |

How she has time for Objectives 3-6 is beyond me. If she writes her newsletter between 6 a.m. and 8:30 a.m., she must be doing it in the car and/or on the boss's time. (In fairness, it is possible she takes public transit and does the writing on her laptop on the train/bus, but I somehow doubt it.)

The mission statement she has for herself is not a mission statement at all. It is a statement about a desired state. Without giving it too much thought, my quick reaction is that a mission of a Christian could be to "love God and your neighbor as yourself."

It would appear to me that Sharon Payton is "sweating (a lot of) the small stuff" just to meet her work schedule. What is her objective in all this? Does she realize that she spends 20 per cent of her time just getting to work? Is that really "making time matter"?

I wish her well.

Harry Boessenkool
Surrey, B.C.

There's no one Catholic or Protestant view

In the April 5 issue the editorial tried to show the difference between Orthodox, Roman Catholic and Protestant forms of celebrating Good Friday and Easter. Many years ago when I was studying art history, it struck me that there is a difference in the way northern and southern Renaissance artists portrayed the crucifixion. Perhaps the most famous gory, bloody depiction is Gruenewald's "Crucifixion", but one could mention those of Cranach, Durer or any other northern Renaissance painters.

In contrast, southern Renaissance

painters, such as Messina, seem to portray Christ not in his sufferings but in his victory. One could nearly say that Christ was reasonably comfortable on the cross. This difference seems to go somewhat against the ideas suggested in the editorial. It may suggest that Roman Catholicism, then and now, should not be portrayed as a unified block of ideas and practices, just as Protestantism could not (and cannot) be described as a unity.

Bert den Boggende
Lacombe, Alta.

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Column/Letters

The Mother's Day dilemma

Mother's Day: the annual opportunity to rightly express our sincere gratitude for the selfless devotion of our beloved matriarchs. In other words — the yearly scramble to find the perfect gift. Is anyone else as intimidated as I am by this formidable task?

Over the years my children have always made Mother's Day a special occasion for me. Thanks to some creative teachers I have numerous handmade mementos, but I also have fond memories. I will never forget the beaming faces of my two daughters as they served me "breakfast in bed" one year. I pretended to stay asleep even though it sounded like a small war was erupting in the kitchen.

Likewise I'll always remember my son's 11-year-old face after he had biked into town late Saturday afternoon to purchase what must have been the last two carnations in Harriston. Hair tousled and face flushed from the forceful wind he had battled all the way back from town, he proudly removed the spindly blooms from his backpack. I placed them lovingly into a vase and couldn't help but smile as their mangled stems shot off into opposite directions.

My great challenge, however, is to find the right present for my own mother, now getting on in years. At a loss for gift ideas, I start with the greeting card. It seems to me they come in two predominant types.

The first type almost nominates the recipient for sainthood. You could probably get cavities from all those sugary adjectives. The other sort has all the warmth and charm of a personal letter from Revenue Canada or the IRS.

Finally, I find something appropriate and head to the cashier. On the way I am struck by a sudden sense of *deja vu*. Isn't this the same card I chose last year? Oh well, maybe she won't remember.

But what sort of gift can I give her? I begin a review of years gone by.

There was the time I gave her an afghan to replace the ratty old blanket she uses to cover the couch. On my next visit the afghan was on the couch, sure enough, right underneath the ratty old blanket now intended to protect it.

Intangible things

Heidi VanDerSlikke



Then there was the year of the tabletop barbecue. As I happily prepared our meal on it, Ma informed me how her neighbor always called when she was barbecuing so that my mother could just throw on whatever she wanted to cook as well. "How incredibly kind," I muttered, suppressing the urge to scream.

Problem solved?

For a few years I thought I had the problem solved. I purchased a beautiful hanging plant for her front porch. To protect it from frost and vandals, she insisted on hauling the plant into the house every night, and back out in the morning. Worried that she might permanently dislocate some important body part, I thought I'd best come up with another idea.

Last year I had a stroke of genius! My mother can no longer plant or maintain a flower bed, so I decided to buy her a "mini garden." Essentially this is a two-foot diameter dish filled with a variety of plants and enough soil to give Arnold Schwarzenegger second thoughts about lifting it. (So much for vandals, I figured.) Ma seemed genuinely pleased as I grunted it into place on her back patio. However, when I returned a few weeks later the thing was relocated onto the front porch. I cringed as she described dragging it singlehandedly out front to discourage the squirrels from hiding their treasures in it.

Now I realize it's the thought that counts — despite that being a cliché. I know my mother would be happy to see me even without a present. Still, I can't imagine going there empty-handed on Mother's Day. I have this inexplicable need to demonstrate my affection in a tangible way. I wonder if she'd see the beauty in a mutilated carnation?

Heidi VanDerSlikke lives in Harriston, Ont., and enjoys writing.

A 'friend' in the house ruins him

In response to the article "How to survive sharing a home with friends or relatives" in the March 8 *Christian Courier*, let me tell you a personal experience.

He had lived in my house for a year. Court rules kept him away from his family. He was very helpful and pleasant. We got used to having him around. He drove the car very well. Later on he repeated his stay and he felt this was his other home.

Many times he mentioned that if I were ever ill, he would take me in. And suddenly a stroke hit me. The next year I spent five months in the hospital as I had been hit by two serious strokes. So he moved his family in: a wife, two daughters and two sons.

By the time I came back from the hospital, my furniture was stored. The little item of \$160 rent for storage space became my bill. Utilities, of course, were also my bill. They paid no rent: "We pay for renovations." He made me sign a

paper that said they could stay for one year at least.

A bit later he explained that I misunderstood; he meant two years. Due to my strokes, my memory must be a bit misty! My computer? I gave it to him, he said, and he sold it. I got the basement room of my own house. If sometimes I ventured into my own living room, he would order me to go back to my room.

I walked out with just an overnight bag. He had the locks changed. Lawyers have written letters telling him to get out. He smiles. And in June he will have been in my house for two years. I was forced to rent accommodations. Deprived of my clothes, watch, camera and so on, it has not been easy.

Think 10 times about moving in with friends. It is the quickest way to turn into enemies!

**Rev. K. Teddy Smits
Belleville, Ont.**

Consider a third alternative

Nick Loenen can not be blamed, while trying to solve the real or imagined problems that plague our political system, for not being familiar with a third alternative. (CC, March 22) He lives in the far West and apparently does not know what happens in the East, in spite of all the modern means of communication.

There are differences, differences of degree between West and East that have plagued Canadian society since its inception. We can dwell on that *ad infinitum*, but we want to move on to some better things in connection with the second alternative.

Mr. Loenen wrote an excellent treatise about proportional representation, and there is little doubt that this would be by far the best solution for a better and more just voting system. The problem would be its implementation. It seems that the current political climate would not invite such a drastic change.

For one thing, it seems highly questionable that Preston Manning would support a transition to proportional representation, considering that the system in use has worked so well for him. This is evidenced by the fact that in the 1997 federal election the Reformed Party emerged with about three times the number of seats the Progressive Conservatives had. The

irony is that there was hardly any difference in the popular vote between the Reform Party (19.35 per cent) and the Progressive Conservative Party (18.92 per cent).

The first alternative is, of course, the United Alternative Party (UAP). The UAP has been more or less doomed since Joe Clark, the leader of the Conservatives, has adamantly refused to have anything to do with Preston Manning, the potential leader of the UAP.

There are other factors that may negatively affect the UAP. For instance, the perception that it is the Reform Party in disguise. And Preston Manning has promoted himself as the as yet unchallenged leader of the UAP, even though the efficacy of his leadership has been criticized, even inside his party. It seems that not much is left of his credibility, partly because of his changes in position.

Loenen's suggestion is a second alternative. And the third alternative? The logical choice and maybe the only choice is the Progressive Conservative Party. It has the potential of being able to penetrate the country beyond Manitoba with a leader that hails from the West and has proven leadership abilities supported by ample experience. Something to think about.

**Bert Vanderduim
Waterloo, Ont.**

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Arts/Media

Michael W. Smith wins six Dove awards

NASHVILLE, Tenn. (EP) - Michael W. Smith won six Dove Awards, including Artist of the Year, as the Gospel Music Association presented the 30th annual Dove Awards in Nashville last month. Smith was the most-honored performer this year. "It took

my breath away for a moment, but I survived," Smith said. Smith was also honored as Best Producer, and got two awards each for work on his Live the Life album and Exodus, a multi-artist album he produced.

Though Smith was named Artist of the Year, he did not win Male Vocalist of the Year. That award went to Chris Rice, who records on Smith's Rocketown Records. Jaci Velasquez, who was named New Artist of the Year in 1997, took Female Vocalist Honors this year.

The late Rich Mullins was once again honored posthumously. Mullins, who was named Artist of the Year honors last year after dying in a tragic automobile accident, was named this year's Best Songwriter for "My Deliverer," co-written by Mitch McVicker. The March 24 awards ceremony included performances by many Christian artists, including Avalon, dc Talk, the Centurymen Choir, Jennifer Knapp, Newsboys, Kirk Franklin and Nu Nation and others.

Calvin grad premieres children's video

Phil de Haan

GRAND RAPIDS, Mich. - Calvin College graduate Scott Storteboom of Dearborn, Mich., allowed the public and his alma mater to take a first look at a children's video he and a partner produced in Los Angeles. It was shown at Calvin in April. The 24-minute video, called "The Giant," is the first in a series which will feature live, child actors within a computer-animated environment.

"Each episode portrays Alison and her three friends as they come across a moral dilemma," says Storteboom. "Through their active imagination the children find themselves in an animated fantasy land which exaggerates the significance of their dilemma. By working through this conflict, in their imagined land, they discover something about proper behavior in the real world."

Lesson learned

In "The Giant," the children become suspicious when they see an unfamiliar mail carrier making the rounds on their block. Assuming the worst, they set out to save the neighborhood from what they believe is a mean-spirited stranger. Upon finding evidence of the mailman's vicious plan, the neighborhood transforms into a brightly colored forest. The only problem is, in their imaginary forest, the mailman has become an unruly giant. Through their adventure the children learn a lesson about first impressions.

Storteboom attended film school in Los Angeles after graduating from Calvin in 1992. He and a business partner, Eliot Briggs, have formed a company called Brigaboom LLC and both returned to their Midwestern roots last summer to film their video in and around Grand Rapids. They shot two episodes using local child actors Audrey and Jay Filson, Dustin Stek and Morgan Cole.

The video can be ordered by calling 616-874-1548.

Library viewing of Internet porn an increasing problem

WASHINGTON, D.C. (EP) - The problem of children and adults using library computers to view Internet pornography is far worse than the American Library Association (ALA) had previously reported, according to a new report from Filtering Facts, a organization of librarians who oppose pornography in libraries.

The March 2 report "Dangerous Access" documents more than 500 incidents of library patrons using tax-funded computers to download pornography, including 20

incidents involving child pornography.

The report documents 195 incidents of children, at an average age of 12, accessing pornography. The report also includes cases of adults deliberately exposing children to pornography as an inducement to molestation.

The report was released at a press conference in support of H.R. 368, a bill in the U.S. Congress that requires filtering software on terminals accessible to children in schools and libraries.

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Church

As bombs fall in Yugoslavia, Christians pray and minister

BELGRADE, Yugoslavia (EP) — Evangelicals in Yugoslavia are often viewed with scorn, both by Orthodox Serbs and by ethnic Albanian Kosovars. But as NATO bombs fall around Belgrade, a local evangelical relief worker has found her apartment full of neighbors seeking comfort in words of hope she read from her New Testament.

"They knew she was a Christian because of her work with refugees in the community," reports Jasmina Tosic of Bread of Life, the humanitarian outreach of Serbian evangelical churches. "People recognize those who have a firm foundation."

Tosic urges Christians around the world to pray for the safety of those in Yugoslavia who do not know Jesus Christ. "Our concern is [especially] for those who do not know the mercy of the Lord," she says. "These are our friends, relatives and neighbors. For years we have been working with refugees, serving them in the name of the Lord. Now we can serve the people

around us."

Because of NATO attacks, Bread of Life has temporarily ceased all aid deliveries to churches in Kosovo and to refugees in the region. "We are blocked," Tosic says. Belgrade streets are deserted and there is great concern over loss of electricity and water in some areas, as well as people's ongoing ability to work and provide for themselves. Tosic also asks that people pray that the food in Bread of Life's warehouse be protected so it can be used by the churches, as intended, to help those in need.

Tosic's story is not unique; throughout Yugoslavia Christians are in action. "They are thinking of their neighbors, relatives and friends," says Branko Bjelejac, a Serbian journalist and evangelical Christian. "They are talking to them and trying to calm them down."

Pentecostal pastor Miodrag Stankovic of Leskovac, Serbia, sent e-mail on March 24 indicating that his church was providing

refuge in a bomb shelter. "Our non-Christian neighbors asked if we would allow them to seek refuge in it. 'Of course,' we said. We also thought of the children from the kindergarten near our church. They will need a safe haven too. We Christians see it as our duty to stand up in the gap between the nations of our land," Stankovic said.

Disarmed by compassion

Pastor Driton Kransnqi in Kosovo also requests continued prayer for the region. "Please continue to pray for the church and God's people here in Kosovo," he said in an e-mail letter to Christians in many parts of the world. "Pray for the refugees all around Kosovo. Your brothers and sisters in Kosovo send their love and appreciation to all of you."

The growing refugee problem also presents an opportunity for Christian witness and ministry. "Reaching Kosovar refugees is the key to establishing a people for His name in Kosovo," says Eastern Europe director of Christian Aid Mission, Ray Miles, who was a missionary to Albania in 1992-93. "There's blessing in the tragedy. This will enable evangelical missionaries working with Eastern European ministries to reach them with the gospel."

Miles recalled visiting a Kosovar refugee family last September while a fellow believer helped them obtain food, clothing and medical care. "This Muslim family, who had eaten nothing but green peppers for weeks, was utterly disarmed by the compassion of these evangelical Christians," Miles says.

"Before that, the only kind of Christians they had known were Serbian Orthodox. Seven years earlier, the head of the family, then a member of the Serbian army, had watched while Serbian soldiers



Yugoslav President Slobodan Milosevic

wearing crosses on their uniforms cut out the eyes of Croatian captives. That was when he abandoned the army and sided with the rebels."

Miles adds, "It is this kind of love-in-action witness that will open the doors of Kosovo like nothing else will."

Religious leaders around the world have urged NATO to stop the bombing in Yugoslavia. The leader of the Greek Orthodox Church in America, Archbishop Spyridon wanted the bombing stopped, at least during the Easter season (Orthodox Easter was April 11). But NATO ruled out an Easter break, saying it would allow Serbs to continue the campaign of ethnic cleansing.

Spyridon also wrote to Yugoslav President Slobodan Milosevic urging him to seek peace. "It requires that both sides in the conflict take action to allow for a return to the process of negotiation," he said. "Together with all the Orthodox people of America, we are ready and willing to be of

assistance to bring peace and stability to your people."

Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew, the primate of world-wide Orthodox Christianity, has also appealed for a cease-fire in the Kosovo conflict. He said, "We beseech [world leaders] to use mutual understanding and mutual concession to resolve peacefully their regional, international and worldwide disputes, in order that they may have the peace of God, and mercy."

Baptists differ

Baptist ethicists have differing views on the conflict in Yugoslavia.

Richard Land, president of the Southern Baptist Ethics and Religious Liberty Commission, said that if anything, the NATO airstrikes came "too late" for him. Land has been calling for military action against Milosevic "for several years" and explained, "Several thousand people would have been saved if action had been taken earlier."

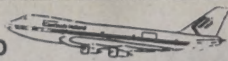
Speaking March 25 on the radio program *For Faith and Family*, Land said, "This is a war-criminal regime. I just hope we have the spine and the nerve to act decisively."

But Robert Parham, executive director of the Baptist Center for Ethics, said U.S. actions in Yugoslavia seem to be "more about military machismo than making peace." He added, "Once again, the Clinton administration's foreign policy looks like, 'Here a bomb, there a bomb, everywhere a bomb.'"

"High-tech bombing without political resolution that leads to peace and security for all only deepens animosities and promises more conflict."

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Slaves, prostitutes, the poor find 'biblical justice'

BOMBAY, India (Religion Today) — In India, a \$50 loan can cost a lifetime of labor. Poor families forced to seek help from unscrupulous moneylenders are selling their children into virtual slavery, says the International Justice Mission (IJM), an Arlington, Virginia-based Christian ministry which investigates and addresses such abuses.

At least 15 million Indian children are bonded laborers, pledged by their parents to work for moneylenders in exchange for small loans, IJM says. They work up to 14 hours a day, six days a week for meager wages that barely pay the interest on the loans, IJM's Gary Haugen has told Religion Today. Some have been in servitude for more than 20 years. "They have already earned their employer over 10 times the original loaned amount," Haugen says.

International Justice Mission has helped to liberate at least 500 children in India from bonded servitude. The practice is illegal in the country, but local authorities often don't enforce the law out of ignorance, indifference or corruption, IJM says.

Acting on tips from local ministries, IJM sends investigators to document abuses, then notifies state or federal authorities. "We take the information up the chain of command and ask them to do the right thing," Haugen says.

'Defending orphans and widows'

IJM says it has helped to free about a dozen child prostitutes. Criminal investigators infiltrated Bombay brothels, documented the conditions and worked with police to free the girls. IJM says it has helped curb abuses by police in Thailand and the Philippines, and helped free two people illegally detained in a Haiti prison. Many of the children are released to Christian ministries, who minister to them spiritually and emotionally.

IJM seeks "biblical justice" for the powerless and oppressed, Haugen explains. The ministry is founded on Isaiah 1:17: "Seek justice, rescue the oppressed, defend the orphan and plead for the widow." It was established two years ago this month after a meeting among leaders from about 75 evangelical missions groups, relief-and-development agencies, international law organizations and government-affairs groups.

Those leaders concluded that an urgent need existed for a Christian justice ministry. Christian groups often observe abuses but don't

have the resources to address them and could face reprisals, Haugen says. IJM gives the ministries an avenue to report the abuses in order to correct them.

Learning to be better rescuers

"The North American church does many things God called us to do very well," Haugen asserts, citing missions, evangelism and relief work. "One thing we have not learned to do well is to rescue the oppressed. The Scriptures are full of God's passion for rescuing those who are victimized by an abusive power."

Christians "flip-flop between obliviousness and despair," Haugen believes. "There are one million new child prostitutes each year, 15 million children who are bonded servants in India and tens of thousands of people languishing in prisons around the world. These are huge problems most people don't know about. When they find out, it's so big they don't know what to do."

Haugen gives people a way to help. He speaks at churches and conferences and has written *Good News About Justice* (InterVarsity Press). The International Justice Mission has six full-time employees and accepts donations and volunteer help. "We try to provide a middle ground, where people are informed but know that they can make a difference," Haugen says.

Prayer plays an important part in the ministry. IJM initially recruited 100 people to pray daily for the ministry. "From the very beginning we understood that we are not sufficient for ourselves and we need the help of Almighty God," says Haugen. There are now 250 people praying daily; the ministry distributes monthly prayer guides and other materials to help people remember the oppressed.

IJM's web address is: www.ijm.org

A different job than you might think

I find it interesting to discover how members of my church think I spend my time. Young people, especially, are so forthright. In a profession of faith class, one 8th grade student said to me, "So, once your sermon is done, is that it for the week?"

Uh... no! There is much work a pastor performs in the course of a week, from sermon writing to administration to pastoral care. Many of my church members know this. They understand much of what goes into making a church "run," and I am blessed to be in a church in which the members appreciate the work done on their behalf.

I am regularly surprised, however, at the misunderstanding that does exist about pastors' work, especially as it concerns providing pastoral care to church members. Even experienced members, many of whom have long been exposed to the work of the church, assume that a great part of my work involves hospital visits and "calling," in the sense that I call on people in their homes.

The truth is, hospital stays are becoming shorter and procedures that used to require at least an overnight stay are now performed on an out-patient basis. Often by the time I learn that someone has been hospitalized, the person is on his or her way home.

Being Christ's ears

"Calling on" folks in their homes has also become less common. The elders of our church do schedule and carry out home visits, but it is rare for me to see people in their homes. The majority of families in our church have two working spouses, which leaves no one at home to see during the day. Most of my "visitation" is carried out in local restaurants, where I meet a parishioner for breakfast or lunch.

The bulk of my counselling load is scheduled during the evening, when, for example, an engaged couple and I will meet in my office for pre-marital counselling. I also care for church members via e-mail, sending encouraging words or pastoral advice.

Although contemporary pastoral care may take different forms than it used to, the goals remain the same. Whenever I meet someone, in a restaurant or in my office, in a living room or a retirement home, my goal is to present Christ to that person. My goal is to listen with Christ's ears and to speak with

Chapter & Verse



Al Wolters
• Mary S. Hulst Antonides

Christ's mouth. I long to expose that person to the love of God in Christ for them.

Burdened by burdens

Those things do not change. Indeed, one of the great privileges of the pastorate is that people trust me to be Christ to them. I am always honored when a person chooses to talk with me, chooses to trust me with a confidence, chooses to call me when something great happens in his or her life or family. I often come away from meeting with a person feeling somewhat amazed that of all the people this person could have talked with, he or she chose me.

The flip-side of the privilege is that sometimes what people share are their burdens: old sins, past abuses, current addictions, family histories that plague and shape them to this day. It is easy then to become overwhelmed by the need, to long to mend the problem, to wish for a quick fix. I remember when I was on my seminary internship that I would try very hard during the course of a conversation to come up with just the right thing to say that would help the person solve his or her problem.

What I have discovered, however, is that it is not my role to solve the problems, for I rarely can. My role is to be a Christlike listener and a godly adviser. My role is to provide the care of a pastor, not the care of a physician or psychologist. I find these reminders very helpful when the pain of my parishioners weighs heavily on my heart.

Pastoral care is a significant part of ministry, and it takes many forms. But the form that fits it best is when I lay my own self aside and let Christ be formed in me for the benefit of those under my care.

Whether over e-mail or over coffee, may God give all of us the grace we need to be Christ to those we meet.

Mary Hulst Antonides is pastor of Eastern Avenue Christian Reformed Church in Grand Rapids, Mich.

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Feature

Good things happen when Tri-unity reigns

Why the concept of the Trinity should excite us

Linda Yeatts

It was a typical Sunday morning service. I tripped down the phrases of the old hymn as if they were a well-worn footpath, their familiarity deeply etched in my memory. "Holy, Holy, Holy ... God in three persons, Blessed Trinity." From my youth I had accepted the Trinity as a tenet of the Christian faith, but the concept of one God in three persons was a mystery.

Though I loved God and trusted his revelation of himself as the Trinity, when I encountered the concept I would encounter what

seemed like a blank space. That uneasy blank eventually grew to a long wordless page in the record of my faith. It troubled me. "I'm a follower of the Triune God," I'd think, "and I don't understand the Trinity myself, so what am I supposed to say to those seekers who would ask me to explain it to them? What is the reason for my faith?"

In the meantime, I listened to the "raw egg" illustration; "Think of the egg as three separate parts: shell, yolk and white, yet, it is one egg," the illustrator said brightly, as he theatrically broke open an egg.

Frankly, this illustration left me cold. I remember one fateful incident when, after the illustrator dramatically cracked the egg and plopped the contents onto a plate, there were (Surprise!) not one, but two yolks. Yipes! What a disaster for the poor guy desperately trying to get his point across.

I heard of another illustration which used the symbol of a man who operated in three capacities: father, a son and brother. He was one man who related simultaneously in these three capacities. Interesting, but something was still missing for me: the *why* of the Trinity.

Humbled and heartened

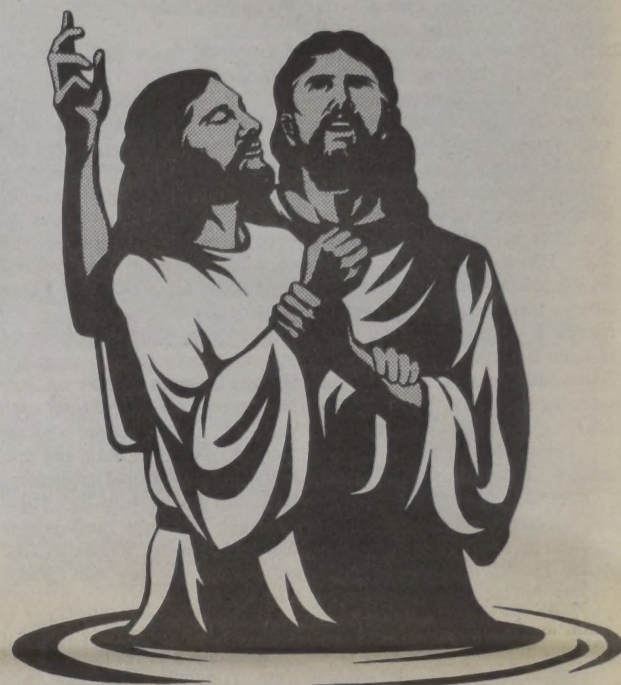
On a typical Monday morning I was going about my daily tasks when I felt a gentle interior nudging. God seemed to be telling me: "I want you to see what unity looks like. The Trinity is a perfect picture of what working together is supposed to look like."

Now *this* simple truth flew for me. God, by his very nature in the Trinity, is giving us a model of unity. I thought of the bickering, self-seeking clamor for attention, jealousy and outright acts of sabotage I'd seen within the Body of Christ; and, quite honestly, I too had been guilty of this with varying degrees of subtlety and subterfuge. God located me on God-My-Own-Way-But-Make-It-Seem-Spiritual-Street. I was humbled and heartened at once.

"It's about unity. The Trinity is about unity." This life-giving idea was firmly entrenching itself as I repeated it, each time getting a clearer view of the importance of the revelation. Then I considered the flip-side of the revelation. What if the Trinity was about self-seeking at all costs?

What if God the Father had said, "Jesus gets all the fellowship. Nobody invites me to weddings at Cana. Nobody kisses my feet, washes them with tears and dries them with their hair. Nobody anoints my body with spikenard. I'll have to take him down a peg or two. Thwart a few plans to remind him who's boss."

No. The Father says of Jesus: "This is my Son, whom I love; with him I am well-pleased" (Matt. 3:17). God further makes his total support clear by declaring, "No one who denies the Son has the Father; whoever acknowledges the son has the Father also"



Jesus' baptism. The Father says of Jesus: "This is my Son, whom I love; with him I am well-pleased" (Matt. 3:17).

(1 John 2:23).

What if Jesus had walked this earth pouting because he didn't get to call the shots while here: "It's heal the sick, Jesus. Raise the dead, Jesus. Teach the masses, Jesus. Do this. Do that. What I really want to do is direct!"

No. Jesus says of his Father: "But the world must learn that I love the Father and that I do exactly what my Father commanded me" (John 14:31). When Jesus spoke of receiving glory it was for the sole purpose of pleasing his Father: "... Glorify your Son, that your Son may glorify you" (1 John 17:1).

As for being in charge, Jesus minces no words about where he stands on the issue: "So Jesus said, 'When you have lifted up the Son of man; then you will know who I am and that I do nothing on my own but speak just what the Father taught me'" (John 8:28).

Perfect in power, love, purity ... and unity

And what if the Holy Spirit had a huge, debilitating pity party? It would seem ridiculous to hear the third presence of the Trinity refusing to strengthen believers, being tired of doing all the work: "I fill and fill, and for what? Half of the

sons and daughters of Adam don't even believe in me. I want recognition or I quit."

No. It is said of the Spirit: "But the Counselor, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, will teach you all things and will remind you of everything I have said to you" (John 14:26).

These scenes are ludicrous. Why? Because God is so good at unity. Anything else is unimaginable. He does all things well, including unity, especially unity. Each member of the Trinity is totally dedicated to carrying out the purposes of God and forever faithful to these purposes, no matter what it costs each personally.

It's another Sunday, and once again we're singing that classic trinitarian hymn. We crescendo to the phrase "Perfect in power, love and purity." I add, "Perfect in unity," and remember that unity is what he wants from me in my relationships with the Body of Christ.

He wants my true support of his purposes in the lives of my brothers and sisters, without jealousy or fear of loss of power or prestige. Good things happen when unity reigns. Let tri-unity reign!

Linda Yeatts lives in Dry Fork, Virginia.

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Vacation

Family vacations and other natural disasters



HEIDI VANDERSLIKKE/PHOTO

We finally made it to "Creation" in Hershey Park, Pa., in 1996.

Heidi VanDerSlikke

A recent national poll shows Canadians rate their annual vacation as the top priority expense. My husband and I were both raised to revere an honest day's work more than a holiday. However, we each have some memories of treasured family trips. And when we started our life together, we didn't intentionally ignore the importance of vacations.

As a matter of fact, we began our marriage in a traditional way — with a honeymoon in Florida. The first two days were paradise. Sultry days ended with candlelight dinners and romantic walks by the ocean. But on the third day euphoria gave way to nausea. Mad dashes to the bathroom replaced the midnight strolls. It was the

worst case of the stomach flu I have ever experienced. The next 48 hours were sheer misery.

Occasionally my new husband would check on his delicate bride, now sprawled like so much roadkill across the queen-sized bed. Between reruns of *The Brady Bunch*, life's cruel irony was not lost on me. In five years of work, I had missed exactly one day due to illness. Now I spent 48 per cent of our honeymoon as a complete wreck. Little did I know it was but a foretaste of things to come.

Ten years, three kids and a couple of mortgages later, we attempted another holiday. It was a stressful year. A new farmhouse had stretched our finances, and a serious drought threatened our desperately needed field crops.

But we borrowed a tent trailer and decided to try camping. For four hours we drove through sweltering heat, then pulled into the perfect campsite and proceeded to erect our temporary dwelling.

There had been absolutely no rain in six weeks. We struggled with canvas and poles while the skies clouded over. The task completed, we pulled on our swimsuits and sauntered off to the beach, oblivious to the cool wind which had suddenly come up. As I spread out our blanket in the sand, huge drops of water began pelting our backs.

It rained for two solid days. We sat glumly in the trailer, staring out at the never ending deluge. Our seven-year-old daughter bent Barbie into inhumane contortions. Her twin brother amused himself by killing the batteries in the flashlight. The two-year-old took to his bed and regressed to the fetal position.

Another irony

Jack's voice broke the monotony of the pouring rain. "People are funny," he said. "They borrow a small fortune to build a great big new home. Then they borrow a little tin box on wheels. They drive it to the middle of nowhere and sit in the woods for two days watching it rain."

His statement of *this* irony made great sense. We packed up and left, thinking at least the rain would have done wonders for our fields. Alas, as we pulled into our lane the dust billowed behind us. Our township had remained dry as a desert, and remained so for another

two weeks.

Undaunted, we continued the yearly search for the perfect getaway. There were some nearly normal holidays, although each had its own memorable moments.

Then came the summer we ventured to Pennsylvania for what was supposed to be the biggest Christian music festival in North America. We travelled for two days. At last the hotel was in sight. We'd take a nap, get freshened up and be in plenty of time for the opening night concert. Jack and the kids waited eagerly in the van as I went to check in.

My hand froze on the entrance door. An 8 1/2 x 11" piece of paper announced the unthinkable news. For the first time in 17 years, "Creation" was cancelled. The inclement weather had caused mud slides and flash floods in the area. After double-checking with the hotel staff, I returned to break the news to the four would-be festival goers in the van by the curb.

Is it any wonder I became tense last winter when we planned our first trip to Florida in nearly 20 years? It didn't really bother me that the only thing lower than the record cold temperatures attributed to El Nino was the Canadian dollar. But when 13 deadly tornadoes swept through the "Sunshine State" leaving thousands homeless and several dead, I started to worry!

I lay in bed that night thinking back to our previous adventures. Was God trying to tell us something? Had there been a way to back out at that point, I would have cancelled the whole deal in a heartbeat.

All of a sudden I felt a little ashamed. It occurred to me that those grieving over a lost loved one, or sifting through the wreckage of their home might have some trouble feeling sorry for an anxious Canadian tourist. Admittedly I had much for which to be thankful. Even in terms of vacations, I get over seven weeks off every year. They come to me in one-day instalments, every seven days, just when I need them most. I closed my

eyes, determined to get some sleep.

For once, splendid

A phone call the next day confirmed that the resort was still standing. With a heartfelt prayer, and summer clothing optimistically packed, we embarked on another "quality week" of fun and frolic.

It is an act of faith just to take an eight-year-old van on a 5000 km round trip. So we shouldn't have been surprised when somewhere in the darkness in the hills of Tennessee a red light flashed its ominous warning: "Check Engine." We scrambled for a flashlight and the owner's manual to interpret the dire advice glowing from the dashboard.

Unnerving as the situation was, we laughed out loud at the explanation in the manual. In a feeble attempt to comfort, it stated, "The vehicle will likely remain driveable for some time and should not require towing immediately."

Imagine my relief when we arrived the next evening at a perfectly lovely resort, vehicle intact, all family members still in good health, and our marriage having survived the inevitable wrong turns along the way.

The next morning I rose early to survey the sun-drenched scenery. Pink condominiums stood starkly against deep blue skies. Lush palm trees swayed in the early morning breeze. Our mini van sat in the midst of sleek sports cars and elegant sedans, rather like a middle-aged housewife sunning herself on a deck full of bikini-clad co-eds (a personal perspective). The day was splendid.

We all slept soundly that night, totally unaware of the tornado that struck a few miles south of us, once again wreaking havoc upon several communities.

Maybe I could make some extra holiday cash by selling a list of our planned vacations to the public!

Heidi VanDerSlikke is a writer who lives in Harriston, Ont.



We shouldn't have been surprised when somewhere in the darkness a red light flashed its ominous warning: "Check Engine."

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Church News

Christian Reformed Church

The Essex Christian Reformed Church, 276 Talbot St. S., Essex, Ont., recently completed a renovation/addition project to its facility. A Dedication Service will be held on Saturday, May 15, 1999, at 1:30 p.m. Everyone welcome!

Vacation

Biking to the horizon

Jan de Bree

The wind was blowing Force 7, almost a gale, when we opened the front door and pushed our bicycles onto the sidewalk. There we stood, two small men on a small street with big plans to peddle from Utrecht to Brugge, Belgium. In a photograph of us, there was the obvious: our bicycles leaned against us, saddlebags at the rear of the bikes were filled and bulging, stacked on top were sleeping bags, foam mattresses and a tent, we carried a map and a travel book for directions.

Despite the wind, the air was warm enough that we wore short-sleeved bicycle jerseys, I in orange and Piet in blue. We worked our way west from Utrecht toward Scheveningen, where we were to spend a night with Piet's parents, my aunt and uncle.

Practice makes perfect

Physically I was in good shape. At home I had practised riding long distances and climbing long, steep hills with my saddlebags filled with weight. However, I had never biked against strong winds. In preparation I had also read library books on long-distance biking and had surfed the Internet, where I found several informative websites.

When it came to packing for the trip, my experience as a backpacker was useful. I knew how to travel light, and was properly equipped. I owned a lightweight nylon tent and the one-burner Coleman stove that operated on naphtha gas. My Gortex coat was useful in the rain and wind, as were my nylon hiking pants. Food would be easily purchased on route, so we carried only a day's supply, except for coffee and coffee milk.

A loaded bicycle poses a serious problem; it will fall down if not supported by a tree or railing. The skill I had to learn in that regard had little to do with bicycling. I had to overcome my embarrassment at having to urinate near homes and people, with only an inadequate shrub for cover.

In Canada someone might have telephoned the police and I could have been charged with indecent exposure. In the Netherlands this was normal. I survived; no one complained; and I learned to adjust. Several hours later, near the town of Leidschendam, I stood confidently on the side of the road with no place to hide, watering the grassy shoulder.



Jan de Bree (left) and friend Piet get set to bicycle to Brugge.

While we biked or rested, Piet and I spent much of our time admiring the older homes built along the river, and the buildings in the villages we passed through. Piet served as my tour guide, providing "color commentary" along the route. We enjoyed the traditional Dutch landscape of flat fields, water-filled ditches, and on the horizon a ridge of trees above which might appear a church steeple.

A brief mourning

In The Hague, the city where we lived before my family moved to Canada, I felt the deep loss which came as a result of immigrating, and for a moment I mourned that loss. I imagined myself living there again. I invoked images of what might have been, until Piet pointed into the forest to a large home guarded by soldiers. "Wouldn't you like to live there with Queen Beatrix and Prince Claus?" he asked. We laughed.

As we travelled south through the dunes along the North Sea, I knew that I was on a small pilgrimage to the town of Maassluis. This place had special significance for me because Smit International, a salvage and towage company, maintained an office there. Sometimes the company had one or two of its tugboats in the harbor. I wanted to see a deep-sea tug, maybe the *Smit Rotterdam*.

The town was also the birthplace of author Maarten 't Hart. I liked his short stories, some of

which were set in Maassluis. I enjoyed especially his story "Mammoth on Sunday." In it, the residents of Maassluis hear rumors that, one Sunday, Smit International will tow a giant drydock up the waterway to the port of Rotterdam. The young boy in the story is forbidden to view the passing drydock because Sunday is the Lord's day, a day of worship.

We peddled the streets of Maassluis, no deep-sea tugboats in the harbor and no mammoth drydock on the waterway. A large offshore drilling platform appeared to be perched on land south of the waterway, where there was probably another harbor. Roaming the streets, we found a bakery where we purchased six raisin buns. And while we ate the buns we talked about several of the country's best novelists, who were lapsed Reformed Christians.

Prepared for trouble

The wind continued to blow as we biked over the dams of the Delta project. Facing the open road on the Haringvliet dam we began a wearisome trek of the three dams, with the sky on the horizon as our goal. Here I gained an appreciation for the Dutch 17th century artists who were so adept at depicting people dwarfed under towering clouds and an expansive sky. When we had cycled the length of a dam, we visited a concession stand for a drink and a snack, rewards for successfully battling the

wind.

On Brouwersdam, Piet's bicycle had a flat tire. We were equipped for this, and more. We carried adjustable wrenches, Allan wrenches, multi-bit screwdriver, a spare tube and tire repair kit. And should we have a serious mechanical breakdown I had with me the book *Roadside Bicycle Repair* by Bob van der Plas.

Once in a while it rained, and despite the winds, on most days we traveled 50 to 60 kilometres, though our guidebook suggested 35 a day. We readily found campsites, and preferred farms that were set up for tenting and charged minimal fees.

The city of Brugge was a surprise. Though the architecture looked typically Dutch, the buildings were better preserved and maintained than in many places, and numerous tourists gathered in the cobblestone city square to look at the medieval buildings and to buy Belgian french fries and chocolate.

Back in the Netherlands, in Vlissingen we boarded a train for Utrecht where our sons waited to join us to experience their own bicycle vacation. We traveled a short distance through Germany so the boys could tell their friends they'd been there.

In the town Slangenburg, near Doetinchem, we camped in a forest, and two evenings in a row walked through the beech woods to the nearby Benedictine monas-

tery whose stone building chapel was constructed by the monks in the early 1960s.

From Slangenburg I embarked on another miniature pilgrimage. I was on my way to the village of Tolkamer, where the Rhine River enters the Netherlands. As a child I had vacationed there in the summer with my father's family. Then, as now, the main industry was brick manufacturing. However, the large smoke stacks and many of the factories have been demolished. The narrow-gauge trains that transported clay and bricks have been scrapped.

Immediacy

In Tolkamer I visited my aunt, who would be celebrating her 85th birthday that evening. My pilgrimage was to her birthday party.

On our itinerary I had a special place in mind for my son. I took him to visit the war cemetery near Arnhem. I arranged this because I had visited the Canadian war cemetery near Groesbeek in 1978. Standing before so many grave-stones was an indescribable experience. I wanted to show him a similar experience and to read the names and ages on the gravestones of those who died in "Operation Market Garden." An elderly man walked among the gravestones. He explained that Jewish visitors mark each visit to a grave with a pebble left on top of the gravestone.

Being in Arnhem marked the beginning of two days of travel through a populated part of the country. We followed the Middle-Netherlands bicycle route, on the same trajectory as the railway and freeway E35. Although we were close to our final destination, we took the time to visit the Ginkel Heath near Ede. Grasses had replaced much of the heather. Sheep grazed the heath to eat away the grasses, and other sections were deliberately burnt to bring back the heather. We saw a few purple flowers.

When I reflect on this experience I conclude that I like the immediacy of people and landscape which being on a bicycle provides. The exercise is invigorating, the pace relaxing. And planning and research can pay off in a pleasurable vacation.

Informative web sites:

Trento Bike Pages: <http://www-math.science.unitn.it/Bike>
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Vacation

Turkey: a beautiful country with Christianity in ruins



ROBERT VANDERVENNEN PHOTO

The church where the Council of Ephesus was held

Robert VanderVennen

ISTANBUL, Turkey — "If you do not repent, I will come to you and remove your lampstand from its place," is the chorus the Apostle John wrote to the seven churches in Asia Minor in Revelation 2 and 3. Those churches remained for a few hundred years. When a group of 20 Christian Reformed people visited Turkey in September 1998, all they saw was ruins and "archaeological sites." Today you need a microscope to find traces of Christianity alive in Turkey.

Asia Minor, now called Turkey, was perhaps the most solidly Christian nation in the world 500 years after Jesus lived. The Apostle Paul was born there, and he left his sweat and blood in the land after walking thousands of miles up and down its majestic hills and moun-

tains. There were also Barnabas, Silas, Timothy, the apostles John and Andrew, and hundreds more. Most of the first councils of the early church, like the councils of Nicea and Chalcedon, were held in Turkey.

We don't like to think of Christian nations losing their faith altogether. But think of Western Europe at the time of the Reformation, and the place of Christianity in those nations today. And Canada and the United States, too, have lost the Christian spirit they had a hundred years ago.

Lampstand removed

In our tour of western Turkey, led by Dr. Bastiaan Van Elderen, who has done a good deal of archaeological work in the land, we found many churches in ruins. A number of church buildings that now serve as mosques,

and some that are museums. The Orthodox Church has a symbolic presence in Istanbul (which they call Constantinople), but their churches are almost invisible and not very alive.

How did Christianity disappear? You may say that the faith of Christians weakened, and God "removed the lampstand." You can also point to historical factors. The Seljuk Turks, a Muslim people from the east, destroyed the Christian Byzantine empire in 1071. Christianity also suffered greatly in Turkey from destruction by Crusaders from 1099 to 1291, who tramped through the land, fighting Christians as well as Muslims, even taking over the government at one point. Still today Turks equate Christians with the marauding Crusaders.

Then came the conquering Ottoman Turks in 1453, who



A stone pulpit from about 500 A.D. Mostly unoccupied until Rev. Gerald Ringnalda stepped into it.

made Constantinople the centre of the Muslim world. The Ottomans severely oppressed the Christians. At times, thousands of Christians lived underground in four- and five-storey structures that even included hidden churches.

During the First World War the Turks sided with Germany, and after the war Greece invaded Turkey but was defeated by Mustafa Kemal, later called Atatürk. At that time most of the Christian Greeks living in Turkey moved out, settling in Greek lands. Atatürk overthrew the Ottomans and in the 1920s revolutionized the country, changing its writing from Arabic script to Roman and westernizing the

country. He created a secular state in a land where 99 per cent of the people are nominally Muslim.

Almost European

Western Turkey is a beautiful land of rolling hills, mountains and plains. The farmland looks well tended, with tractors being heavily used. Farmers do not live on their land, but in nearby villages. People dress in European/North American style. In the rural areas women cover their heads, but we did not see much of the more radical dress of Muslim women that can be seen in other Muslim lands.

Turkey lies between Asia and Europe, with less than 10 per cent of its territory in

Europe. Yet is oriented to Europe, has been a member of NATO for decades; it is sadly disappointed that it has not yet been accepted into the European Union. Istanbul lies in both continents, with the Bosphorus separating the two. We were amused by our bus rides across the bridge between the two continents, which

included the sign, "Welcome to Europe."

Modern, "progressive" Turkey continues to oppress and discriminate against some of its people in the eastern areas, such as the Kurds and Armenians — and Christians. Today Christianity is in ruins. As in other Muslim lands, it is illegal for a Muslim to become a

Christian. Mixed marriages are permitted if the Christian partner becomes Muslim, so marriage is a beleaguered institution for Christians.

Pray for the church in Turkey, and for Christians there.

Dr. Robert VanderVennen is a retired educator and promoter of Christian education and publishing who lives in Toronto.



An ancient baptismal in Ephesus where both clergyman and convert would walk down into the water.



The ruins of the church at Pergamum, Turkey.

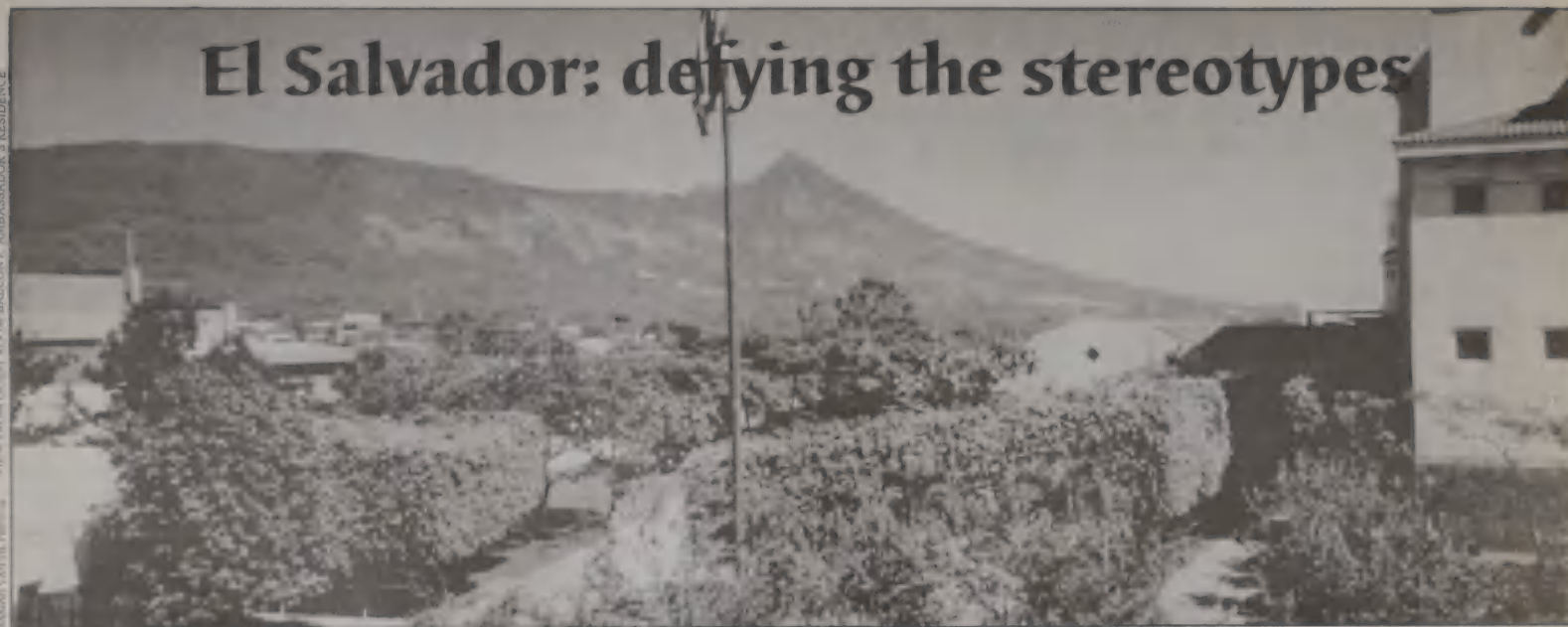


Homes and a church carved into volcanic rock.

Vacation

El Salvador: defying the stereotypes

VIEW FROM THE ROOF ROOM BALCONY, AMBASSADOR'S RESIDENCE



Marian Van Til

El Salvador. Despite the agreeable climate, this country surely doesn't spring to mind when you're looking to escape snow shoveling and dead batteries in January or February.

A long, bloody civil war. Catholic nuns being gunned down. U.S. foreign policy gone wrong. Impoverished, uneducated peasants living in despicable hovels. Environmental degradation. Hurricane damage. Those are the more likely images which will arise. And those are stereotypes.

The war was over some eight years ago, and much has changed.

To be sure, there is still extreme poverty (more about that later). But the other side of El Salvador embodies Salvadorans who have regular jobs; those who stayed in school; those who own their own restaurants, coffee farms or numerous other kinds of businesses which provide jobs and goods for their countrymen and women, and exports to foreign markets; those who are concerned about their country's environment and its social problems and who are contributing to solutions; those who are active in government as a peaceful

way to bring change; those who are finding active ways to help increase education and alleviate the poverty. People who are trying to live their convictions and faith; in short, people not so very unlike us.

The 10 days my husband, Ed Cassidy, and I spent in El Salvador in February of this year dashed many pre-conceived notions, and that's exactly what El Salvador's Tourism Ministry hopes will happen more frequently to more and more visitors.

An ambassador's guests

Ed and I were in a unique position to see both sides, and to experience many things typical tourists wouldn't. That's because we were guests of American ambassador Anne Patterson and her husband, Dave, and our "hotel" was a guestroom in the American Embassy.

How this came about lies in the realm of "amazing stories." On the Internet, as part of a C.S. Lewis discussion forum, I "met" Dave about a year-and-a-half ago. Occasionally we began corresponding off-list. From discussions about Lewis, to other literature, to our mutual Christian faith — he's an Episcopalian (Anglican) and I'm the music director in an Episcopal church — we became friends. (He's also the one who introduced me to the historical sea novels of Patrick O'Brian about which I wrote last fall, which has opened a whole other hobby to me.)

Ed and I met Dave and his son Edward last summer, and hosted them for a night at our house. And he and Anne invited us to visit them in El Salvador.

James Bond doesn't live here

We flew to the capital city, San

Salvador, from Toronto, via Miami — which along the way brought us over Cuba, from the air a mysterious, fat green snake of an island.

Dave and the embassy "expediter" greeted us at the airport, and in no time we were headed down a dark highway on the 3/4-hour drive to our temporary home. The current American Embassy, by far the largest held in El Salvador by any foreign country, was finished in 1991 at the end of the civil war, as both bombings and a severe earthquake (a common occurrence in the region) had virtually destroyed the previous one.

Being recently built it incorporates all the safety specifications for American embassies which were recommended after a study by the Inman Commission in the mid-'80s. Its Spanish style buildings with orange tile roofs and creamy, whitewashed walls are set in a 26-acre compound full of lush tropical trees and flowering plants.

Though surrounded by an outer wall in the same style, and built like a fortress, it doesn't particularly look like one. I admit, though, that the mass of antennas and evidence of other communications equipment on the roof of the chancery, visible from our balcony, made me think that mysterious James Bond-like activities might be going on inside.

But real life is more mundane. The chancery is the main embassy building where the ambassador has her large but modest office and all the diplomatic work gets done. I was almost a bit disappointed to find that inside it looked quite ordinary, a great deal like any large, urban office building, which these days would be likely to have security checks which rival those we encountered at this "secure" government facility.

We got our first taste of "security" on our arrival from the airport. A wide gate swung open as our blue van with its distinctive orange license plates bearing the letters CD (*Cuerpo diplomático*) pulled up to the embassy driveway and guardhouse. We stopped just inside the gate and the expediter shut off the engine, popped the hood release, rolled down his window and greeted the guard.

The guard lifted the hood, looked carefully all around the engine compartment, then lowered it again. He then took up a mirror affixed to a four-foot pole, thrust it under the edge of the van and walked all around the vehicle — checking for bombs.

Meanwhile Dave chatted with us as if this were the most normal thing in the world. And it is — if you live in an American embassy. Within a day or so we were almost as blasé about this little procedure as Dave is. It's not really necessary in today's El Salvador, he explained. The Americans are now quite welcome; but such precautions are a required ritual at American embassies worldwide.

A 'nice hotel'

Our guestroom, one of two such rooms on the second-floor side wing of the ambassador's private residence, was very much like a comfortable hotel room. Its balcony looks out to the chancery and gives a splendid view of the San Salvador Volcano in the distance.

The ambassador's apartment (almost entirely pre-furnished by the U.S. government) is divided into the private upstairs living area and the more public, ground level entertaining/working area. The latter includes a library/den which opens into a wide corridor area containing a grand piano.

That hall, in turn, leads into a large sitting area and dining room. Both of those open onto a beautiful canopy-covered terrace edged by a fountain set in a small garden area and a large back yard. On numerous days we ate one or more of our meals on the terrace, listening to gurgling water and the chirp of bright birds we didn't recognize and enjoying the warm breeze and good conversation.

Weather like Paradise

No matter where we were, the weather was nearly perfect. Always sunny but never unduly hot. Always a pleasant breeze, never too humid. San Salvador is about a half-hour's drive from the coast, and except for the coastal region, the country is mountainous. Of about the size and population of the state of Massachusetts (5.6 million), El Salvador's northwestern border is Guatemala and its north/northeastern border is Honduras. On the south lies the Pacific Ocean.

We spent one delightful day at the ocean. We were the guests of friends of the Pattersons, Victor and Gloria Silhy, the amicable, devout Catholic couple who own the Salvadoran branch of the Wella Corporation, the German-founded international haircare and pharmaceutical company (there's a Canadian branch in Mississauga, Ontario).

A white-sand beach stretched, deserted, for miles. The emptiness was largely explained by the fact that we were there in the middle of the week, and during the work-day; but also on account of the ocean there exhibiting a strong undertow, requiring much respect from those who wish to wrestle with it. But fitted with life belts, wading out into a three-foot or so



Ambassador Anne Patterson



Dave Patterson



Ed Cassidy

depth of the saltiest, most buoyant water we had ever encountered was exhilarating: the fast, powerful waves relentlessly try to push you back to shore.

The week before, we had been given a tour of the Wella factory. The Silhys are proud of the fact that they use natural plant rather than artificial chemical substances in both their hair products and pharmaceuticals (such as a fungicide cream). And they're happy to be providing good jobs for Salvadorans.

An esteemed diplomat

El Salvador is the smallest, most industrialized and densely populated of the Central American countries — that, despite the fact that since the 12-year civil war (1979-1991), 20 per cent of Salvadorans now actually live in the United States, and many thousands have become U.S. citizens. That is a major reason why the U.S. maintains such a prominent embassy in El Salvador. And also partly why El Salvador alone receives one-third of all U.S. aid to the Western Hemisphere.

Ambassador Patterson is eager to provide resources the Salvadorans ask for in order to better help them help themselves. She is on excellent terms with the Salvadoran government and President-elect Francisco ("Paco")

Flores, who takes office on June 1st. She is a career diplomat who knows Spanish fluently, as does Dave, and is genuinely happy to be in El Salvador, where she has about a year remaining of what are now normally three-year ambassadorial appointments. Dave, at age 56, is retired, but was also a diplomat, his area of expertise having been the Middle East — they lived in both Saudi Arabia and Iraq for a time, as well as Geneva and Washington; their permanent home is in Virginia.

On a couple of occasions when Anne's schedule allowed her to go out with us, we had the novel experience of being accompanied by her official bodyguard and by a "follow car" which tagged along (or rather, raced along, nearly on our bumper) in case of untoward events. Again, this is not really necessary any longer, but the security people are Salvadoran police who get an extra stipend from the Embassy for security duty there, and the Ambassador doesn't want them to have to forego that extra income. It's clear she is very well liked, by Salvadorans in general and by Embassy employees, many of whom are Salvadorans. Everywhere we went, she (and as a result, we) were treated with esteem.

Turning things around

Few Salvadorans now living in the U.S. intend to return permanently to their homeland, but there is much contact maintained back and forth between U.S. Salvadorans and their Central American relatives and friends. Every day as we left the embassy compound we saw blocks-long lines of Salvadorans waiting to get American visas.

The people we met were uniformly friendly and hospitable. Observers who know Central and South America say there are general characteristics which seem to apply to the people of each country, the Salvadorans being known particularly for

their industriousness.

There's ample evidence of it. The country suffered tremendously during the long years of the civil war, but in the relatively few years since, they've made remarkable strides towards union and healing (despite some North American journalists' stories to the contrary). A country-wide civilian police force has replaced "enforcement" by either guerillas or the army. We met prominent people who said: during the war, so-and-so was my enemy, but now we're friends.

The poor are still with us

While the economy is gradually coming round, extreme and widespread poverty is still a huge problem. It is fueled by the fact that at least one-third of the population is illiterate. And currently, 40 per cent of children drop out of school by Grade 5.

That doesn't allow them many options when it comes time to find jobs that will pay more than subsistence wages. That's why at nearly every stoplight you see Salvadorans of all ages selling fresh fruit, chewing gum, hot meals or cold drinks. And why you see women at roadsides collecting wood suitable for cooking fires, that ubiquitous fuel which frequently tinges the air with brown haze and the scent of wood smoke.

The government has enacted education requirements which it hopes will help to work toward alleviating some of that poverty, and in fact, it's illegal for children not to be in school. But that law is difficult to enforce. Perhaps the one blessing in the flimsy shanties that are home to so many of the uneducated is that it is never cold in this tropical climate, though in the highest mountain areas it gets chilly.

Coffee addicts' dream

Those mountains are home to thousands of acres of coffee plants. El Salvador's major agricultural crop. There are multinational-owned and/or operated farms which are now producing coffee hybridized to be able to grow in the sun, which is much less labor-intensive and saves money, but which causes erosion and other environmental problems (96 per cent of El Salvador's original forest cover is gone).

However, we visited a family-owned coffee farm, Santa Leticia, which is part of a co-op of farms of various sizes. The co-op allows local control, the offering of fair wages to pickers and a



Workers spread hulled coffee beans to dry.

good price to farm owners. As a group, they export their coffee (though it may be packaged under the names of the individual farms) and pour resources back into the country.

Ricardo Valdiviezo, owner with his two daughters of Santa Leticia, took us on a truly grand tour of their farm, high in the mountains. He is proud of the fact that he uses environmentally sound growing methods: no pesticides, and the traditional coffee plants which grow in the shade of taller trees, and which help maintain biodiversity. An interesting sidelight is that there are the remains of several important Mayan monuments at Santa Leticia, which are protected but able to be seen by visitors.

An uncommon man

Born in El Salvador, from a family with a long, activist history there, the gregarious Valdiviezo grew up in New York City, served in the U.S. Army and then somewhat unexpectedly returned to his native country. He is a former Salvadoran government minister, but that doesn't stop him from assuring visitors that they may call him Rick, or Ricardo, if they prefer.

A founder of the ARENA party (of which president-elect Flores is a member), Ricardo was a target of assassins during the civil war, and was in exile in Honduras for a while. Once he was gunned down, but escaped with only a leg wound. He and a colleague also actually came before a firing squad and were released at the last moment.

He talks of these things now with a certain nonchalance. And in fact, said finally, with a modest grin: "...But that was a different Ricardo. That was a different

world. I'm a farmer now. This (producing coffee) is what I do." And now he'll surely never live elsewhere.

Santa Leticia runs its own coffee mill to process its own beans, a fascinating procedure to watch, from the dumping of the just-picked, red-hulled, sweet-tasting berries, to their washing, hulling, being spread to dry with long-handled wooden paddles, to their eventual roasting and packaging (Salvadoran coffee, in order to qualify as "gourmet," must be sun-dried). The best beans get gourmet status. Lesser beans are sold to commercial companies at cheaper prices.

From hand-picked berries to bagged beans, producing coffee is an arduous task. Never again will I complain about the cost of coffee, which now seems like a bargain at virtually any price.

Looking for visitors

In this surprising country, the average tourist is being made more and more welcome. Good accommodations are available and most things are still inexpensive by North American standards. The local bus system, though, can be hazardous in terms of wild driving, smog-emitting vehicles and all-too-frequent armed robberies. But there are safe alternatives, and this country has much going for it which should interest visitors.

The next time you're looking for a tropical vacation spot, consider El Salvador.

Interesting websites:

www.coffee.com.sv
www.isinfo.org.sv
www.search-beat.com/elsalvador.htm



Valdiviezo and Mayan carving

Vacation

Letting go

John Krueger

My quiet room in our Toronto apartment was a refuge. Rarely could I ever get out of the city past the noise and concrete, so I took an inner journey instead. Devotional books lined my shelves and with the click of a button, the reverie of John Michael Talbot or Taizé music filled the little space I made for God.

All this changed before our first child arrived. I dismantled my sanctuary, assembled a crib, hauled in a change table and plunked a rocker in the corner. The cross stayed on the wall. When my son was born, the quiet nightly liturgical prayer of "Compline," which means "complete," was replaced by the wail of a colicky infant. My carefully designed program of spiritual formation underwent quick fragmentation. Amid the noise and my exhaustion, the whisper of the Spirit was drowned out. I wanted to be still and holy; instead I changed diapers, wiped a runny nose and cleaned applesauce which had been flung on the kitchen floor.

Sometimes Jesus comes to us like a playful clown, poking fun at our intense spiritual journeys. It makes me wonder: "Is nothing sacred?"

More than ever I needed a place to be quiet, so that's why I went on retreat every few months. I jiggled

the key to open "The Hermitage" — a hundred year old milkhouse, renovated for those who needed to come away for a while. Made from local field stone and squatting in front of a hill, it looked like a Hobbit house from J.R.R. Tolkien's "Lord of the Rings." I went there to write in my journal, hike the trails and bathe in the silence. If God wanted to speak, my ears were perked.

A necessary glimpse into the future

The Spirit comes to disturb the comfortable, and sometimes to prod those who are asleep. I remember shaking my head back and forth on my pillow that night, either to wake myself up or to deny what I was seeing: The door was slightly ajar and in the brightly lit room lay my mother at her funeral. I awoke in a stark terror and flew out of the Hermitage to pace the woods. As far as I knew my mother was in good health, and she confirmed this through my gentle probing on the phone the next day.

The dream was disturbing but peaceful — that paradox which made me suspect that it was God and not the beans I ate for supper that triggered my imagination. It seemed as if God had taken me with one hand and with his other nudged open a door to the near future.

There had to be a reason for his doing this and I knew in an instant



Made from local field stone and squatting in front of a hill, it looked like a Hobbit house from J.R.R. Tolkien's "Lord of the Rings."

what it was: I had been shell shocked by parenthood, and as an only child myself I was ready to call it quits. But God has something to say in matters of life and death. He balances the scales and knows the eternal cause and effect of a new birth on the living and dying. The time had come to let go of my fears about having a second child.

"Mommy, there's a door in your tummy and I want you to put

Rachel back in and lock that door." My son was not impressed with his baby sister, but his grandmother certainly was. Yet even as she cradled her new granddaughter, the shadow of death was poised over my mother's shoulder. A week later I got the call and raced to the hospital where I could barely recognize the gaunt, frail lady I found lying, sedated, in bed.

I sat on the porch of my childhood home that evening. The sight of the neighborhood loosened memories which arose in a frenzy like a thousand sparrows taking flight. Here was the street where I played road hockey, tossed newspapers, fought a bully and had my first kiss. My head was in a whirl so I went inside to write in my journal. God knows that writing helps some of us to stand back and "name the animals" in our life, so

we can let go and find wholeness.

I snapped my journal shut and Mom's cat slinked under the couch. Then I glanced at a half finished puzzle — an idyllic scene from Florence — sprawled on the card table. My footsteps creaked on the hardwood floors and my prayers felt as empty as that old home.

But then the phone rang. "John, your mother isn't going to be here much longer, don't go back to Dundas." Mom's friend who was a nurse — and an angel — warned me to prepare for the end. I hung up the receiver and had the peculiar sense that God was asking me to let go and let Mom go home to him. Four hours later it came to pass — as, in just over a year, did my dream at the Hermitage.

We drag ourselves to funerals, pack up our belongings and choke out our goodbyes. We are all called to uncurl our fingers and let go of family, friends, homes, jobs, churches and even cherished quiet time. But after those moments of letting go, something new is placed in our arms — like my baby daughter whom I held so tightly when I looked down at my mother. Amid death there is a resurrection of hope. Because of the One who let go of everything, and spread out his hands for us.

John Krueger is the career and placement co-ordinator at Redeemer College in Ancaster, Ont.

Out to Sea

Hilda Born

Every beach needs careful examination before you rush into the playful ocean waves. We know this well, especially since my prairie-born husband is a non-swimmer.

Our two-week stay in Puerto Vallarta got off to a fine start when our booking at a modest hotel was upped to the Sheraton Bouganvillia at no extra cost. The reason for this was recent tidal wave damage. So we gloned in the opulent surroundings.

We enjoyed regular concerts by smartly uniformed mariachi in glittering sombreros. Broad smiles and drooping black moustaches enhanced their performance. With gleaming brass instruments and strumming guitars they marched in the tropical heat.

I interacted well with the beach vendors who bring their tablecloths, blankets, trinkets, etc., to



We enjoyed regular concerts by smartly uniformed mariachi in glittering sombreros.

your beachmat. Great conversationalists, they willingly shared a slice of Mexican life with anyone

who wished to hear. I especially liked helping them practice their English in exchange for increasing

my meagre Spanish vocabulary. I learned that some of these daytime salespeople go to college in the evening.

The cuisine of tropical fruit and fish was a constantly varying delight. Sometimes I was reluctant to disturb the artistic platters presented to us as dinner. An inexpensive bus or taxi ride over the cobblestone streets brought you to many more artists who work with cloth, clay and paint.

What to do with the boots?

After three visits to a leather shop, we finally bought a superbly crafted pair of cowboy boots.

On our last afternoon we went to the beach once more to dance in the waves. It was our final salute to the sunny south before flying back to our northern winter.

As usual, we began carefully, always watching the oncoming

waves. They lured us progressively a little deeper into the ocean until one mighty green wall of water knocked us over. Frantically I clawed and scrambled toward shore.

For a moment, I could not see my husband; then he emerged, minus glasses, and stumbled to shore. Too. Only later, I realized our foolishness and how close I'd come to flying home alone. "And what would I do with that beautiful pair of boots?" I scolded.

"It would have saved you funeral costs if I'd been swept into Banderas Bay," he grimly humored me.

Puerto Vallarta will always remind us to respect the relentless might of the ocean. It is, after all, "the tossing sea which cannot rest" (Isa. 57:20b, NIV).

Hilda Born lives in Abbotsford, B.C.

Vacation

Readers share holiday experiences

A scary walk in the dark



A residential section of Auckland, New Zealand.

Gerda Van Donk

The following is not a vacation experience I would recommend, but it may be a story of interest anyway.

When I worked in New Zealand I spent a holiday in the vicinity of Auckland. One evening in early November I traveled by bus into the city. Having been born in the Netherlands, speaking English was still difficult for me at the time. So when asking about the return bus I waited at the wrong bus stop and saw "my" bus leave, but didn't realize it.

When a bus came to the stop at which I was waiting, I found out its destination was a half-hour walk

short of my hotel. By the time I got off the bus and was ready to begin my walk it was nearly dark, and twilight doesn't last long in that part of the world.

My first scare was a rustling I heard in the grass along the side of the road in an area where the houses were set back from the road and there were no lights to be seen. My heart pounded. But it was only my own plastic raincoat, put on against the evening chill, dragging along the top of the tall grass.

Next I saw several gleaming points alongside the road. Was that a couple of people smoking cigarettes? There was hardly any traffic, and I wondered about these

strangers. Coming closer, the "smokers" turned out to be the remains of a smouldering bonfire from previous night's Guy Fawkes celebration.

As the odd car would pass, instead of wanting to be left alone I got to hoping it would stop. Then there was a turn-off. I had seen the sign from a distance, but wasn't sure which road to take. On moving closer to the sign, which I could barely see, I ended up on my knees in a dry ditch — though I was finally able to make out which way to go.

When the lights of the hamlet were in view, a car coming from there stopped. It was a pleasant young man who said that on passing me earlier he had been unable to stop to pick me up; he had been going to show a film in the village, and 40 years ago that took a careful of equipment, so there was no room for me. But he had now come back to see if he could give me a lift the rest of the way. It was now just a short ride to the hotel.

There was no night staff, but the door had been left unlocked. A pleasant talk with my "rescuer" brought my nerve-racking evening to a more agreeable close.

Gerda Van Donk lives in Lethbridge, Alta.

'May I see your passport?'

Tena Spek

Our family always liked camping. In the summer of 1971, my sister Jetty from the Netherlands was planning to visit us. This was her first visit to Canada, and for our children, then aged four to 17, the first visit of an aunt from overseas.

We wanted to go camping in Ontario, ending in the Ottawa area, then coming back home through the U.S. For the occasion we bought a large stationwagon and a tent trailer, and a week after Jetty's arrival we set out. We did a great deal of sightseeing — and laughing.

When we neared the border to enter the U.S. my sister announced that her passport was in the bottom of her suitcase, which, in turn, happened to be packed away in the bottom of the trailer.

My husband told us not to worry, she probably wouldn't need it. But just in case, someone jokingly suggested we put her under the sleeping bags and try to smuggle her in unseen.

When we arrived at U.S. Customs,

my husband was asked his citizenship: Canadian. No problem. Then came my poor sister: Dutch.

"May I see your passport?" And my husband began to unpack the trailer.... Finally, out came the suitcase. But it contained no passport. Suddenly Jetty recalled that she had left it in her other suitcase,

which just happened to be at our home more than a thousand miles away.

"Sorry, you'll have to remain in Canada."

We shed a few tears, and headed for Montreal. But we still had an unforgettable holiday.

Tena Spek lives in Brampton, Ont.

It is with joy and thanksgiving that we hope to celebrate the
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with Rev. John Zantingh

All former Pastors and members are invited to help us celebrate this joyous occasion. A special booklet on the history of our church together with a 50th anniversary directory are available for \$10.00. Book accommodations as soon as possible. For information call 613-393-5256 or 613-393-2126.

Pinerie Provincial Park

Eve Mazereeuw

I have spent wonderful hours camping in the peaceful forest of Ontario's Pinerie Provincial Park with family and friends. Beautiful Lake Huron beaches, quiet walking trails, clean campsites, and its proximity to our home make this park an ideal vacation spot for us. That's why we chose it on one particular long weekend in 1994, a weekend vividly etched in my memory.

A group of us had reserved adjacent sites. Alfred and I pitched our tomato-red Canadian Tire tent; set up the baby's playpen and rolled out little Anna's sleeping bag. Then we put up our feet and switched into lazy mode. We enjoyed sunny days, starry nights and dazzling bonfires provided by a cabinetmaker friend. The weekend passed oh so quickly.

Monday morning, coffee in hand, we sat around the smouldering ashes of the previous night's bonfire. Anna toddled between lawn chairs, eating stale potato chips. Nobody was eager to leave.

Then it happened. Anna stumbled over the lip of the fire pit, lost her balance and landed on the hot ashes.

Much too slowly I reached out to stop her fall. She screamed in anguish; I screeched and grabbed her. Sobbing and panicking, I stood there as Anna wailed. Others had calmer heads. Ice water chilled her hot skin. Medication and gauze were applied with loving hands.

In times of crisis it is good to be surrounded by friends. As I rocked my distraught two-year-old, fellow campers dismantled, packed and loaded. Within the half hour we were on the road to the doctor's office.

This story has a happy ending. Today Anna bears neither scar nor memory of her mishap. We have returned occasionally to the Pinerie, drawn by the beauty of the park, and the memory of friendship extended our way.

Eve Mazereeuw lives in Guelph, Ont.



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Opinion

*Dog fight or tea time?**Elizabeth,*

Greetings from South Korea. I'm excited about writing this column with you. It was good that we could chat a few times to hash some stuff out and get psyched up. From the looks of things, the show's ready to start.

I have a bunch of concerns about writing this column. Like I told you last week, our audience — and our relationship to them — is an issue. Another is what Bert and Marian want from us. Another is my age — 30! — which crept up on me last month and belted me across the face. What's really interesting is how all these concerns are interrelated. I don't keep a diary, so much of what I write will be the first time I'm getting it down on paper. Hmmm. Maybe this will be therapeutic. What are you thinking about our new gig?

*Dirk**Dear Dirk:*

Greetings from Vancouver! And welcome aboard. I'm excited too, though I'm having some weird feelings of *deja vu*, starting a column (again) with someone I've never spoken to. Peter feels like my best buddy at the moment, despite our rather odd cyber-relationship.

I once read somewhere that there are two kinds of writing: one that ought to be read by others, and one that makes good therapy for the writer. I get the distinct impression those two purposes are not compatible. So, for the sake of our audience, please don't go touchy-feely on me, Dirk. Did you know C.S. Lewis wrote that keeping a diary was a "time-wasting and foolish practice"?

Yet I've read some amazing journals that go far beyond the realm of the writer's private thoughts. And I hope this column will go beyond the realm of a conversation between two people at opposite ends of the world from each other. (Hey, I just had a revelation: neither of us lives in Ontario's Golden Horseshoe. How's that for giving *Christian Courier* a global perspective?)

*Elizabeth**Dear Elizabeth,*

Yeah, I'm glad we are where we are. The fact that we're away from the Niagara/Toronto area is in itself a topic of discussion. I want to mention something else. It has to do with CC's pairing us up. Bert has been honest about how he recruited us for our pit-bull tendencies. He wants a dog-fight. I'm not sure, however, that a dog fight will occur. I think we have too much in common. I remember Bert's "Settle instead of waiting for someone you really love" editorial of 1996. I was completely on your side when you wrote the CC a letter in which you called Bert "the master-baiter."

In a nutshell, here's my concern; Bert, Marian and the CC editorial advisory committee apparently want us to write because they believe two critical people with "progressive" opinions will eventually go to war. But I don't know over what we'll disagree. So I'm walking around these days thinking I might let people down if you and I just have polite, friendly dialogues.

A related question. Can you lessen the chances of fighting/arguing by talking about it beforehand?

*Dirk**Dear Dirk,*

First of all, I can't take credit for the "master-baiter" pun — I'm not that clever. I believe that was another reader's term for Bert. And second, this is starting to get (alas) rather touchy-feely. Here's why: most of my friends and family do not find my "pitbull tendency," as you call it, my best feature. I've been told I should be more accepting. So I've struggled with it and I sometimes feel lost as I vacillate between two different personality types: one rather feisty and temperamental and the other pretty quiet and reserved. I guess I've always seen it as a character flaw that I can't seem to find the middle ground.

I think my personal dilemma can serve as a metaphor for the world we live in as well, if I might be so bold. We hear a lot of noisy, terribly destructive and petty discourse surrounded by deafening silence in the face of injustice. The trick is to find the appropriate response for the appropriate situation. When asked to express an opinion about how our next door neighbor should lead a Christian lifestyle, we have lots to say. When asked what to do about systemic poverty, we shrug our shoulders and say it's too big a problem to grapple.

Does talking prevent arguments? You'd think so, but history doesn't treat negotiators kindly — look at Neville Chamberlain.

E.

Elizabeth Salomons
egs@smartt.com

Two
Under
35



Dirk Schouten
dbschouten@netscape.net

Elizabeth,

We share the same kind of personality. I can get ticked off quickly, too. But I've become more mellow over the last few years. I've learned that although being outspoken and emotional doesn't necessarily get you in trouble, it will make other people ignore you. And then you're left with no power at all, which is what feisty people (well, *all* people) are fighting for in the first place. On second thought, maybe instead of becoming more mellow, I've become more political.

As for your personality being a metaphor for typical Christian responses, well, I don't buy it. I think you're being too hard on yourself. Your tendency to be quiet on occasion most likely doesn't represent apathy. Those moments are more likely periods of reflection than periods of time when you don't care. And I think a feisty nature is for the most part a good thing. It means you care enough to not care what other people think about the way you show you care.

I agree about the nature of Christian responses, though. We all know how to "talk the talk." People don't worry about "walking" as much. I still regret a college career during which I fell in love with the easy, Christian answer and walked around like I knew it all. But if we expose this truth more, people will realize we all know how to talk. And then one of two things will happen; 1) we'll all get self-conscious and shut right up; or 2) we'll become more active and talk less.

By the way, are you a golf fan? The Masters just finished and I'm thrilled Tiger Woods didn't win. That guy is way too feisty.

Dirk

☐☐☐☐

Dirk,

I guess Korea isn't all that far away if you still can get your sports fix! And I'm beginning to think you might be right — that we are going to end up agreeing with each other a lot. I guess we'll find out over the next few months, won't we?

*Till next time,
Elizabeth*

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CALVIN THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY

Advice

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Dear P & M:

A young man who is a member of our Christian Reformed congregation moved from our church to a neighboring CRC a little over a year ago. Now this young man and his fiancée, both professing members, are about to get married. Because most of his family and friends are here and because we have the room and the parking, his parents have asked for the use of our church building for the ceremony and the banquet.

After deliberating this at two meetings, our consistory refused them the use of our church. The reason? The minister of the other CRC is a woman! Since a wedding is not an official church service sponsored by our consistory, and all is done according to church order and provincial laws, I think consistory is way off base, even though personally I am also against women being ordained. What do you think?

Dear Church Rental:

You are right about the fact that Reformed tradition/theology does not see wedding ceremonies as having the same status as official Sunday worship services. In denominations that view marriage as a sacrament, this would be different, of course. Has this been pointed out to your consistory?

This comes from a view of themselves as guardians of the "sanctuary," though at a Reformed wedding there is really no pulpit or sanctuary to "guard." Their view comes from the belief that every event that takes place within the church building must be in harmony with every policy and position that they have taken. From that perspective, they would probably ask: How can we welcome a woman to the pulpit on Saturday and refuse her on Sunday?

Some councils take a different view of their facility and develop rental policies that welcome other groups. They view the building as a place made of wood, brick and glass which can be put to either good use or not so good, or even bad, use. This view frees them to rent the building without taking responsibility for every position the renting group has taken. For example, many churches welcome Alcoholics Anonymous groups even though they refer to God as a "Higher Power." Or a church might make the building available for a Mennonite conference or group who have different theology than we do. Or they might let a Boy Scout troop regularly use their building.

Having said all this, the truth is that every church has a line in that regard which it will not cross. Our own church, Jubilee Fellowship, has a very welcoming policy in place. In fact, our church is listed in the Yellow Pages under "Hall Rentals." As a result, we get many requests. But we say No to those who want an open bar with hard liquor and

Peter and Marja



are IN

beer (not because we're teetotalers but because some Christians are and might wonder about our witness, and because open bars sometimes get out of hand).

We say No to any group which wants to gamble by setting up a bingo night. And we will refuse any religious festival that is not Christian. So you can see that even the most "neutral" of rental policies has its limits, and that the leadership has the right and the responsibility to refuse any event in their church building which is in conflict with their beliefs.

In your situation we wonder if your church council ever considered the following compromise: Having difficulty with the idea of a woman preaching from our pulpit we must say No to your request to hold the ceremony here. But we welcome you to make full use of our building for the banquet and reception. Such a decision would have allowed them to uphold their position and yet extend hospitality.

In any event, every church is helped by a clear policy that covers the use and rental of the building. We're sure that your council does not want to spend any more meetings on questions like these in the future. You may want to ask your council to work on such a policy and to present it to the congregation for their input and support.

As we discuss the use of our church buildings, we need to remember what the New Testament teaches. It says that the church is the people of God called out of the world and gathered together in the name of Christ. It shows the church gathering in homes and outdoors. Later, the church would find refuge in catacombs. Clearly, from the moment that the curtain was torn in the Holy of Holies, the location no longer mattered. A Christian became the temple of the Holy Spirit. The church was the body of Christ wherever it found itself on every day of the week. This biblical understanding has always been the Reformed view about our people and our buildings. This perspective should help us in developing policies around the use or rental of our facilities.

Write to: P & M, 16 Kimbermount Drive, St. Catharines, ON L2N 5V6.

Peter and Marja Slofstra are a pastor and wife team who live in St. Catharines, Ont. They are assisted by an advisory panel consisting of Herman de Jong, Bill Lidken, Alan Vndermaas, Marian Van Til and Bert Witvoet.

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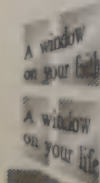
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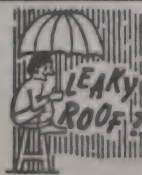
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News Comment

Nose for News



Bert Hielema

THE DUTCH ARE SMART.

I don't say that because I happen to have been born in the Netherlands. That has nothing to do with it. When I say that the Dutch are smart, I try not to be chauvinistic. Take their latest invention. Very useful, and it will save a lot of time, and perhaps relationships as well.

What am I talking about? Well, something very basic. When during intermission at concerts, plays or movies we men go to the restroom, it takes us just a few minutes to do what is necessary. And then we wait patiently for our wives or female companions who have to cope with long line-ups in the women's room — an inequality women have complained about for decades.

Just as there are urinals in men's rooms, the ever compassionate and resourceful Dutch have manufactured a female urinal and have called it "Lady P." I have not seen how it works, of course not, since such an event is

not meant for male eyes, but from reports reaching me it does the job as quickly as its male counterpart. It is my contention that through this invention humankind has been served well by the ever clever Dutch.

YOU KNOW THAT a clumsy, stupid person may be called an "oaf." But do you also know that the acronym OAF stands for Operation Allied Forces. That's the name for the military might now engaged in bombing Milosevic.

OAF is certainly an apt name here. How clumsily and stupidly have the NATO forces become entrapped in this quagmire, which will probably resemble the Vietnam fiasco. Just imagine: the best military minds in the world, engaged in a warlike operation for which these professional soldiers have been training all their lives. However, they went into this hazardous undertaking seemingly without visualizing the proper sce-

narios and without counting the possible consequences. The so-called collateral damage in lives, property and the environment is beyond reckoning. These high-ranking militarists are acting like a bunch of oafs, in my view.

I would say NATO, at age 50, with Russia's might gone, stands for Nonsensical. Aged, Tired Outfit. Slobodan M. wants chaos and to build a greater Serbia, "cleansed" of Muslims and most ethnic minorities, and so far he has had his way. Stay tuned. It will be a long affair. Do you know why Milosevic's mansion has not yet been bombed? On its first floor hangs a Rembrandt painting.

THE GLOBE AND MAIL recently showed a graph illustrating a thousand years of chills and fevers, of hot and cold temperatures. It shows that this 20th century has been the hottest by far, with the year 1998 reaching a new peak. The climatic variations were reconstructed from studying tree rings, lake and ocean sediments, ancient ice and coral reefs.

Talking about the weather: European rain is so full of toxic pesticides that much of it is too dangerous to drink. Analyzed samples found four times the limit of poisonous substances considered allowable by the European Union. There goes one of the old Medical Mission Sister songs down the drain: "I saw raindrops on my window: joy is like the rain." Not since rain became acid.

WITH MANY NUCLEAR reactors in Ontario out of commission, about 25 per cent of the electricity there now comes from coal-fired generators, which will lead to more acid sadness. Want more bad news? Antarctic glaciers are melting faster. In the past 50 years, 7,000 square kilometres of ice shelves have disappeared. Now suddenly, in the last year alone, 3,000 square kilometres of ice has become water, a trend which will eventually up sea levels dangerously. *Nature* magazine reported that the rate and acreage of rain forests disappearing in Brazil is double original estimates — all clear signs that global warming is proceeding very rapidly.

SOME BETTER NEWS. It now is verified that vitamins can play a major role in fighting cancer. They may not prevent it, but several studies presented at a meeting of the American Association for Cancer Research show that supplements of multivitamins and vegetable-based capsules may slow the course of cancer. Tomatoes were mentioned time and again, as the lycopene which makes tomatoes red is a known antioxidant, as are beta-carotene and Vitamin A. All these have slowed that dreaded men's disease, prostate cancer.

THERE IS A NEW BOOK out, entitled *Cannibals with Forks*. In it is a line that I like: "Is it progress if cannibals start eating their victims with cutlery instead of using their hands?" The author refers to oil companies who suddenly have started worrying about the environment while still pumping billions of gallons of carbon dioxide into the air. More and more businesses are now having to prove that they operate in the broad public interest, and they're trying to make it appear that they have social and environmental consciences.

TALKING ABOUT FORKS reminds me of eating. Food guides have always confused me because I never knew how much a "serving" was. Just recently I discovered the truth, and now I know at last how much or how little I am supposed to eat. Here is what I found, so that you too can stay within your weight limit. Recommended in the Daily Food Guide is: dairy: 2-3 servings, with a serving being a cup of milk, a cup yogurt, 1 1/2 oz. of cheese. For protein: also 2-3 servings of 1 egg, 2-3 ozs of lean meat, 2 tablespoons of peanut butter, 1/2 cup of dried peas. Vegetables: 3-5 servings: 1

medium potato, 1/2 cup of cooked vegetables 2-4 servings of fruit. A serving being 1 medium apple, banana, orange or pear, 1/2 grapefruit, 3/4 cup of juice. Grain: 6-11 servings, each serving 1 slice of bread, 1 oz dry cereal, 1/2 English muffin, 1/4 bagel.

KEEPING YOUR WEIGHT

under control is one facet of staying healthy. Another is frequent hand washing. According to the U.S. Center for Disease Control, hand washing is the most important means of preventing the spread of infection. Fully 80 per cent of afflictions such as chest colds, strep throat and stomach flu are spread directly by hands and touching, and not through the air, as many people believe. Thousands of infectious microbes can live on doorknobs and telephone handsets for up to three hours.

Consider the kinds of bacteria, parasites and fungi that could be passed from person to person in a typical airport near you. E coli, staph, Hepatitis A and pinworm. Go to Mexico and you may get diphtheria, or other unpleasant surprises. Infectious diseases are the leading cause of death and sickness worldwide. Only about one in three people actually wash their hands after using the toilet — women a bit more, men a little less. Proper handwashing means lathering for 15-20 seconds and scrubbing all surfaces, rinsing with warm water, and drying, preferably with paper towels.

A NEW BOOK DISCUSSES

the issue of fidgety children. Its title: *Ritalin Nation*. Its warning: whatever you are doing, stop it. About 41/2 million children in North America are drugged daily by Ritalin because psychiatrists have diagnosed them as rude brats, suffering from Attention-Deficit-Disorder (ADD). Ritalin is a stimulant much like cocaine. Richard DeGrandpre is worried about this drug which resembles an illegal narcotic. What disturbs him most is that these kids are labelled with a medical condition when it is more probable that their upbringing is to blame. Kids raised on television, the Internet, jam-packed schedules, and with parents who work long hours get used to high levels of stimuli and develop what the author calls "rapid-fire consciousness." "Spend more time with the children," is his advice. It is striking that the drug is used 50 times more here than in Europe.

Bert Hielema lives in Tweed, Ont., which is situated midway between Peterborough and Kingston (a 90-km stretch) and Toronto and Ottawa (a 200-km distance).

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| <p>Our new e-mail address: ccadpromo@aol.com</p> <p>Thank You</p>  <p>The Lord has enriched our lives with good friends and family. We want to thank everyone for making our 50th wedding anniversary so wonderful.</p> <p>Thank you all for the many best wishes, gifts and prayers.</p> <p>Love, Hank & Joan Westerveld</p> | <p>TO GOD BE THE GLORY With great thankfulness to our Heavenly Father, we celebrated on April 17, 1999, the 92nd birthday of our father, grandfather, great-grandfather and great-great-grandfather</p> <p>ARIE STRUYK</p> <p>We pray for God's continued blessings in times to come.</p> <p>With love from your children and their families: Wilhelmina & (Albert † 1993) Bakker Peter & Henny Struyk Riet & Tom Schenk George & Ada Struyk Harry & Jenny Struyk Ed & Trude Struyk Henry & Grace Struyk Con & Janice Struyk Pearl & Albert Postma Bill & Sandy Struyk Bert & Effie Struyk and 56 grandchildren, 98 great-grandchildren, and one great-great-grandchild.</p> <p>We also celebrate that father ARIE and mother EGBERTINA († 1974) STRUYK, with eleven children, arrived in Canada on May 21, 1949.</p> <p>Psalms 121 Address: Arie Struyk, R.R. 8, 168 Logan Road, Dunnville, ON N1A 2W7</p> | <p>Vlaardingen St. Anns the Neth. Ont.</p> <p>1949 May 4 1999</p> <p>With great joy and thankfulness to our God we announce the forthcoming 50th wedding anniversary of our parents</p> <p>PAUL & JOHANNA DROPPERT Congratulations from all your children, grandchildren and great-grandchildren:</p> <p>Martin & Elly Boerefyn — Grimsby, Ont. Tim Boerefyn & Bianca Vanderbyle (engaged) Jeff & Maria Boerefyn (John, Caleb) Cody & Lisa Pacquin Stephen, Sarah Boerefyn Carolyn, Jennifer, Richard Glasbergen</p> <p>Pete & Corrie Snieder — Holyrood, Ont. Gary & Michelle Stein (Kaitlyn) Johanna, Nicholas Snieder Leo & Beatrice Droppert — Wainfleet, Ont. Jason, Jeremy, Timothy, Joshua Paul & Diane Droppert — St. Catharines, Ont. Rachel, David, Bryan, Steven</p> <p>Open house will be held on Saturday, May 8, 1999, from 2-5 p.m. at Smithville Christian Reformed Church.</p> <p>Home address: 6999, Regional Rd. 65, R.R. 2, St. Anns, ON L0R 1Y0</p> | <p>1939 May 10 1999</p> <p>"The eternal God is thy refuge, and underneath are the everlasting arms." (Deut. 33:27)</p> <p>With praise and thanksgiving we announce the 60th wedding anniversary of our parents, grandparents, and great-grandparents.</p> <p>JOHN & BONNIE LOOPER</p> <p>We are thankful to God for all His blessings to you throughout these years.</p> <p>Congratulations, Mom and Dad! With love, from your children: Ywe & Barbara Heide & Sylvain, Ywe & Julie (Samuel), Carl & Lisa John & Pat Ian Jenne & Jackie Amy & Murat, Maryiem Albert & Liz Jason, Julie, Carolyn, Mark, Amanda, Lorraine, Jonathan, Terry, Tristan</p> <p>Home address: 203 Brenda Cres., Woodstock, ON N4S 7R8</p> |
| | | <p>1949 May 18 1999</p> <p>The Lord willing and with much thankfulness, we hope to celebrate our 50th anniversary, with our children and grandchildren.</p> <p>HENDRIK W. KORTEN & HERMIEN KORTEN - BUSSINK</p> <p>Please join us in celebrating at our open house on Saturday, May 22, 1999, from 2-4 p.m. at the Bethany Christian Reformed Church, 1086 Balfour Rd., Fenwick, Ont.</p> <p>Home address: R.R. 1, 3436 Canboro Rd., Fenwick, ON L0S 1C0</p> | <p>40 YEARS</p> <p>"Unless the Lord builds the house its builders labor in vain. Unless the Lord watches over the city, the watchmen stand guard in vain." Ps. 127:1</p> <p>With joy and thanksgiving, our parents</p> <p>JOHN AND RENNIE FEDDEMA married on May 12, 1959, will be celebrating their 40th wedding anniversary on Saturday, May 15, 1999. In their honor and as part of the festivities, we invite family and friends to join us at an open house from 3:00 to 5:00 p.m. at Westmount Christian Reformed Church, 403 Drury Lane, Strathroy, Ontario. Mailing address: 5864 Inadale Drive, RR #2 Strathroy, ON N7G 3H4</p> <p>Best wishes only, please. A donation to the Canadian Foodgrains Bank would be appreciated.</p> |
| | | <p>Engagement</p> <p>Hilda and Harry Fernhout and Diane and John De Gier</p> <p>are pleased to announce the engagement of their children JOHANNA ALICIA and MICHAEL CHRISTOPHER.</p> <p>We celebrate the gift of love God has given you.</p> <p>37 Durham Crescent Brampton, ON L6T 2X7</p> | |

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| Obituaries | Obituaries | Obituaries | Job Wanted | Miscellaneous |
|---|---|---|--|---|
| <p>Almkerk the Neth. Bradford Ont. April 27, 1909 - April 12, 1999 "The Lord is my shepherd...and I will dwell in the house of the Lord forever." (Ps. 23) On Monday, April 12, 1999, suddenly but peacefully, our Lord called our dear and loving wife, mother, Oma and great-Oma. CATHARINA de PEUTER (nee de GRAAF) from her earthly home, to go to His home in glory. Beloved wife of John Sr. Dear mother of: Bill & Rita de Peuter Audrey & Ken Killer Rika & Stewart Andringa Harry & Grace de Peuter Mary de Peuter Corrie & George Verkaik Lawrence & Marie de Peuter John & Corry de Peuter Bastian & Ena de Peuter Henry & Colleen de Peuter Gary & Dorothy de Peuter David & Shirley de Peuter Cathy de Peuter Dear sister of Wies Baks of the Netherlands. Special aunt to Woutje. Also survived by 34 grandchildren, 41 great-grandchildren and predeceased by five grandchildren. Funeral Service was held at the Springdale Christian Reformed Church, Springdale, Ontario, on April 15, 1999. Pastor Howard McPhee officiated. Donations to the Springdale Christian Reformed Church Building Fund would be appreciated. Expressions of sympathy may be sent to: John de Peuter Sr., 200 Holland Court, Apt. 407, Bradford, ON L3Z 1R8</p> | <p>Pemis the Neth. Grimsby Ont. 20 June 1904 - 16 March 1999 Departed this life, to be with his Lord and Savior, CORNELIS VAN DYK Predeceased by his wife of 63 years, Neeltje den Arend, and by his great-grandson, Adam. Retired owner/operator of Van Dyk's Dry Goods, St. Catharines. Caring father of: Gary & Audrey Van Dyk — St. Catharines, Ont. Lina & Tom Zylstra — Glen Morris, Ont. Harry & Nienke Van Dyke — Hamilton, Ont. Joan & Homer Bruinsma — St. Catharines, Ont. John & Audrey Van Dyk — Kitchener, Ont. Charles Van Dyke — Kitchener, Ont. Gerry & Nellie Van Dyk — Cambridge, Ont. Also survived by 17 grandchildren and 13 great-grandchildren. The funeral service was held on March 20, 1999, in Maranatha Christian Reformed Church, St. Catharines, during which we were comforted by Pastor Walt Vanderwerf with a message on the text chosen by our father: "For behold, I create new heavens and a new earth." (Isa. 65:17) The graveside ceremony at Niagara Lakeshore Cemetery was led by our father's spiritual caregiver of the last few years, Rev. George Van Arragon, chaplain of Shalom Manor, Grimsby. Correspondence address: J. Bruinsma, 31 Strathcona Dr., St. Catharines, ON L2M 2A8</p> | <p>June 16, 1931 - April 8, 1999 After a long battle with leukemia, JETZE YTSMA in his 68th year, went to be with his heavenly Father. He will be sadly missed by his loving wife, Anke, and his children: John & Joyce Ytsma — Alliston, Ont. Grace & Al Kiers — Burlington, Ont. Janet & Peter Piersma — Burlington, Ont. Bill & Renita Ytsma — Stoney Creek, Ont. Yvonne & Jim Fletcher — Burlington, Ont. Andrew Ytsma — Stoney Creek, Ont. and 13 grandchildren. Son of the late Pope and Jantina Ytsma of the Netherlands. Brother of Alle & Rennie Ytsma, Gerrit & Diny Ytsma, Boele & Sietske Ytsma from the Netherlands and Bill & Sien Ytsma from Dunnville. Brother-in-law of Jantje & Jolle Devries from Listowel, Ont., Mien Terhamsel, Hanny & Albert Boonstra, Abellien & Henk Bron from the Netherlands. Funeral service was held April 12, 1999, at the Fruitland Christian Reformed Church with Rev. VanderWindt officiating. Correspondence address: Anke Ytsma, 5770 Blind Line, R.R. 3, Campbellville, ON L0P 1B0</p> | <p>17-year-old male with full driver's licence looking for a summer job at a farm or greenhouse, etc. in Ontario with a Christian family. Phone: 613-398-7626.</p> | <p>Looking to Rent. Cottage for the last week of July. Mom and 4 teens, Bike trails and swimming a must. Please write: Nellie Van Geest, 308 Daleside Pl., Waterloo, ON N2L 5M4.</p> |
| <p>Maasdijs, Z.H. Grimsby the Neth. Ont. January 20, 1910 - April 3, 1999 "For we know that if the earthly tent we live in is destroyed, we have a building from God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens." (2 Cor. 5:1) It pleased the Lord to take unto Himself our dear husband, father, grandfather and great-grandfather. LEONARD HORDYK at age 89. Survived by his loving wife, Neeltje (nee VanVliet), and loving children: John & Tina Hordyk — Port Burwell, Ont. Jenny & Sid Kaastra — Clinton, Ont. Paul & Sylvia Hordyk — Millbrook, Ont. Len & Ena Hordyk — Burlington, Ont. Bill & Betty Hordyk — Wyoming, Ont. Audrey & Bill Teeuwssen — St. Catharines, Ont. Nick & Cory Hordyk — Carleton Place, Ont. 33 grandchildren and 61 great-grandchildren. Predeceased by great-grandson, Shawn Kaastra. The funeral service was held in the Maranatha Christian Reformed Church, St. Catharines, Ont. Correspondence: Mrs. N. Hordyk, Shalom Manor, 12 Bartlett Ave., Grimsby, ON L3M 4N5</p> | <p>Surhuizen Fr. Meaford the Neth. Ont. 1906 - 1999 ROELINA HILVERDA - VAN SCHEPEN "The Lord is my rock, my fortress and my deliverer, my God is my rock, in whom I take refuge." (Psalm 18:2) Our Lord, in His infinite wisdom, took unto Himself our precious mother, grandmother and great-grandmother on April 8, 1999, in her 93rd year, after a brief illness. Lovingly remembered by her children: Tjalje & Sake Dykstra — Clarksburg, Ont. Bonne & Betty Hilverda — Custer, Wash. Murk & Margaret Hilverda — Abbotsford, B.C. Stien & Frank Ritskes — Hamilton, Ont. Joe & Hennie Hilverda — Guelph, Ont. Henry & Pauline Hilverda — Belleville, Ont. Jeff & Kerry Hilverda — Kelowna, B.C. Mike & Immy Hilverda — Meaford, Ont. Rietje & Bill Bax — Carrying Place, Ont. John & Pamela Hilverda — Thornton, Ont. 40 grandchildren and 51 great-grandchildren. Correspondence address: Mike Hilverda, R.R. 2, Meaford, ON N4L 1W6</p> | <p>Personal Christian single male, 33, working with learning-disabled students, would like to make friends of the opposite sex in NB, ON or QC. Please send your e-mail to: maximstg@hotmail.com or letter to: Maxim Gendron, 1225 130th Street, St-Georges, QC G5Y 7Y6 Attractive elderly gentleman (young at heart) looking for lady companion, with a good sense of humor. Mischievousness could be an asset. Fond of outdoor life. Likes music. Who will share "walking with the wok" (in kitchen) or anywhere. Please send letter to File #2690, c/o Christian Courier, 4-261 Martindale Rd., St. Catharines, ON L2W 1A1 Reliable, understanding, middle-aged Christian male seeking fun-loving, responsible, active Christian female for the long-term. Send letters to File #2692, c/o Christian Courier, 4-261 Martindale Rd., St. Catharines, ON L2W 1A1 Christian woman, 51, divorced 4 years ago, no children at home, would like to meet Christian man of Dutch background, 50-55 years of age. Send letters to File #2693, c/o Christian Courier, 4-261 Martindale Rd., St. Catharines, ON L2W 1A1</p> | <p>CLINTON, ONTARIO ADULT LIFE LEASE RESIDENCES available 936 sq.ft. to 1235 sq.ft. Fully wheelchair accessible, sprinkler system, central air, security throughout building. Dutch and English spoken. For more info. call (519) 233-7296 or (519) 482-7862. The Victoria Christian Retirement Society operates 12 rental suites in the "Oakwood," a Christian retirement home. For information, and to be wait-listed, contact: Gerry Ensing, Secretary 3947 Nelthorpe Street Victoria, BC V8X 3Z2 Phone: (250) 727-0248 E-mail: gerry_ensing@bc.sympatico.ca</p> | <p>AYLMER, Ont.: Immanuel Christian School invites applications for definite openings for 1999-2000. We have a 50% kindergarten position and a 100% primary-junior position. Primary-junior position will also require teaching intermediate music/choir/band. Computer literacy would also be considered an asset. Please send a complete resume to: Mrs. Marianne Vangoor Immanuel Christian School 75 Caverly Rd. Aylmer, ON N5H 2P6 BRAMPTON, Ont.: Timothy Christian School solicits applications for teaching positions - openings throughout the grades for the upcoming school year. Please send resume and include philosophy of Christian education to: Jane Tjeerdsma, Principal Timothy Christian School 49 Ferris Lane Barrie, ON L4M 2Y1 phone: 705-726-6621 fax: 705-726-8571</p> |
| | | <p>Church News Our pastor, Rev. James Mantel, will be retiring this year and we will be seeking a new pastor for our congregation. Neerlandia Christian Reformed Church, Alberta, Canada.</p> | <p>Available Comfortable 2 bedroom house from August 23rd to October 4th, 1999, in St. Thomas, Ont. Car at occupant's disposal. For more information, call 519-633-5125.</p> | <p>Teachers Do you want to teach in a Christian school in Ontario or PEI? Check out positions with the Ontario Alliance of Christian Schools at www.oacs.org Updated weekly LONDON, Ont.: London District Christian Secondary School is inviting applications for a music teaching position. We're in need of a gifted teacher who can teach vocal and/or instrumental music. We have a well established choir which has been part of our school for many years. We're planning to introduce an instrumental music program in September, 1999. If this opportunity interests/excites you, send your resume, references and a statement of Christian faith to: Mr. H. Kooy, Principal London District Christian Secondary School 24 Brassyside Ave. London, ON N5W 1V3 phone: 519-455-4360 fax: 519-455-4364</p> |

Classifieds

| Teachers | Teachers | Teachers | Miscellaneous |
|---|---|---|--|
| <p>CLINTON, Ont.: The Clinton and District Christian School, currently presenting Christian Education to 234 students in grades K - 8, invites applications for two teaching positions. One is a definite single junior grade position. The other position is a possible senior grade maternity leave Sept.-Nov. 99. Interested applicants should submit a letter of application, resume, philosophy of education, transcripts and references by May 26 to:</p> <p>Clarence Bos, Principal Clinton and District Christian School Box 658, Clinton, Ont., N0M 1L0 phone: (519) 482-7851 fax: (519) 482-7448 e-mail: cdcsc@tcc.on.ca</p> | <p>OAKVILLE, Ont.: Oakville Christian School requires a part-time French teacher (70%) and a primary teacher for September, 1999. Our school is an interdenominational school affiliated with ACSI. Send your resume, statement of faith and letter of application to:</p> <p>Mr. Herb Goodhoofd, Principal Oakville Christian School 112 Third Line Oakville, ON L6L 3Z6 phone: 905-825-1247</p> <p>OAKVILLE, Ont.: John Knox Christian School is presently accepting applications for the following position: Maternity leave for Grade 7 Language Arts, Math, Bible and Grades 6, 7, 8 Drama. Applicants must hold a valid teaching certificate and be able to integrate computers into the curriculum. Position begins August 30, 1999, until March break 2000 (March 10). Please submit resume and letter of application by Monday, May 10, 1999, to:</p> <p>Mrs. L. Keith, Principal John Knox Christian School 2232 Sheridan Garden Drive Oakville, ON L6J 7T1</p> | <p>SARNIA, Ont.: Lambton Christian High School, located in Sarnia, Ont., requests applications for vacancies in French, Mathematics, Computers, and Sciences. Please send your resume and a brief statement of your philosophy of education to:</p> <p>The Principal, Lambton Christian High School, 285 Essex St., Sarnia, ON N7T 7H3 Phone: 519-337-9122 Fax: 519-337-2541 e-mail: lch@tct.net</p> <p>WOODBIDGE, Ont.: Toronto District Christian High School invites applications for a science (physics, biology) position and an English position. These two full-time positions begin August 1, 1999. Please send resume, credentials and statement of faith to:</p> <p>Ren Siebenga c/o Toronto District Christian High School 377 Woodbridge Avenue Woodbridge, ON L4L 2S8</p> | <p>Christian Courier is looking for an energetic EDITOR</p> <p>who will, via editorials and personal and electronic interaction with current and new readers and contributors, help promote CC's vision and mission and re-shape our future. Applicant should have journalistic training and writing experience, be a team player and be able to appeal to thoughtful biblical Christians of all ages and from a variety of church traditions.</p> <p>We strive to be faithful to Scripture in the neo-Calvinist tradition, to foster and communicate a biblical worldview, and to challenge readers to apply biblical principals to their lives and the issues of our day.</p> <p>Contact: Marian Van Til, Managing Editor. E-mail: ccmneditor@aol.com; 1-800-969-4838. 261 Martindale Rd., Unit 4, St. Catharines, ON L2W 1A1.</p> |
| <p>DUNNVILLE, Ont.: Dunnville Christian School invites candidates to apply for the position of Educational Assistant for the 1999-2000 school year. This is a five mornings per week position. The successful applicant will assist teachers in the Primary Division with the Language Arts Program and the Special Education teacher of our school with special needs students, including students with Down's Syndrome and Fetal Alcohol Effects.</p> <p>D.C.S. is a well-established school, in a semi-rural setting, but close to urban centres in the Niagara Peninsula. If you would like to become part of a vibrant team with a mix of young and young-at-heart colleagues who are committed to provide high quality Christian education, please forward your resume to the Principal:</p> <p>Mr. A. J. Vanderstoel Dunnville Christian School R.R. 1 Dunnville, ON N1A 2W1 phone: 905-774-5142 fax: 905-774-5519 e-mail: arievon@mergetel.com</p> | <p>ORILLIA, Ont.: Orillia Christian School, located in the "Scenic City" on the beautiful shores of Lake Simcoe, invites candidates to apply for the following positions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">- a definite part-time vacancy in the intermediate division- a definite part-time vacancy in the resource program- a possible part-time vacancy in the primary division <p>It will be possible to combine two of the above positions to create a full-time position. O.C.S. is an interdenominational K-8 school that just last year completed a beautiful new gym facility and computer lab. If you are interested in joining our dedicated team, please send a letter of application and a resume, including a personal statement of faith to:</p> <p>George Hoytema, Principal Orillia Christian School Box 862 Orillia, ON L3V 6K8 phone/fax: 705-326-0532</p> | <p>TABER, Alta.: Taber Christian School, an interdenominational school, has two definite openings for the 1999-2000 school year. The positions available are at the Junior High level (7-9) and at the Primary/Intermediate level. The successful applicants will be committed Christians, knowledgeable about and able to articulate a reformed world and life view. The junior high position will require a person with a major in mathematics while the primary/intermediate person will have a strong background in music. Experience in P.E., coaching and language arts would also be an asset. Please fax or send your resume to:</p> <p>Mr. David B. O'Dell (Administrator) 4809 - 60th Avenue Taber, AB T1G 1E9 fax: 403-223-4693 phone: 403-233-4550</p> | <p>DE DERTIGSTE (30) HOLLANDSE DAG WORDT GEHOUDEN WOENSDAG 9 JUNI 1999 OM 10 UUR IN DE MOOREFIELD COMMUNITY CENTRE</p> <p>SAMENZANG, VOORDRACHTEN, MUZIEK ENZ. MEDEWERKING VAN "DOUBLE DUTCH"</p> <p>SPREKER: DS. J.D. HELLINGA OF AYLMEER, ONT.</p> <p>LUNCH MEENEMEN EN UW EIGEN KOFFIEKOP. VRIJ KOFFIE EN KOEK.</p> <p>VOOR GEZELLIGHEID EN PLEZIERIG UITGAAN, MOET JE DE HOLLANDSE DAG NIET OVERSLAAN.</p> |
| <p>NEWMARKET, Ont.: Holland Marsh District Christian School near Newmarket, Ontario, is looking for an intermediate teacher able to teach band for the 1999/2000 school year. If you are interested in being part of our team and have a strong practical faith, please contact:</p> <p>Henry Lise, Principal HMDCS 18955 Dufferin St., R.R. 2 Newmarket, ON L3Y 4V9 phone: 905-775-3701 fax: 905-775-2395 e-mail: hmdcs@neptune.on.ca website: www.neptune.on.ca/~hmdcs</p> | <p>OSHAWA/WHITBY, Ont.: Immanuel Christian School invites applications for a part-time Junior/Intermediate position (66% FTE). Strengths in Math/Science or French will be considered an asset. Please forward your resume, with a statement of faith and your philosophy of Christian education to:</p> <p>Stan Baker, Principal 849 Rossland Rd. West Oshawa, ON L1H 7K4 e-mail: immanuel@sympatico.ca</p> <p>WOODSTOCK, Ont.: John Knox Christian School is in urgent need of a French Specialist Teacher to fill a part-time position beginning in September 1999. Our plans are to have the successful candidate teach the French program in Grades 5 through 8. Please send your application to:</p> <p>William Barneveld, Principal P.O. Box 243 Woodstock, ON N4S 7W8</p> | <p>TERRACE, B.C.: Centennial Christian School invites applications from committed Christian educators to fill openings for the 1999/2000 school year in the following areas:</p> <p>Intermediate Opening - Grade 5 Learning Assistance - Grades 4-10 Music Grades 1-5 and Band Grades 6-10.</p> <p>These positions may also involve teaching duties in other areas. Centennial Christian School is an inter-denominational school and currently offers Christian education to approximately 220 students in Kindergarten - Grade 10. The addition of Grades 11 and 12 is being planned. Please send letter of application, resume and other pertinent information to:</p> <p>Centennial Christian School Frank Voogd, Principal 3608 Sparks Street Terrace, BC V8G 2V6 Phone (250) 635-6173 Fax (250) 635-9385</p> | <p> THE KING'S UNIVERSITY COLLEGE Christian University Education</p> <p>Director of Interdisciplinary Studies</p> <p>The King's University College, a Christian liberal arts college offering 3- and 4-year B.A. and B.Sc. degrees and a 2-year after-degree B.Ed., invites applications for a half-time, tenure-track position as Director of Interdisciplinary Studies. The successful candidate will have a Ph.D. and demonstrate credentials and experience in interdisciplinary program development and course delivery, administrative ability, and a commitment to an integrated Christian approach to undergraduate, liberal arts education.</p> <p>This crucial position involves organizing semi-annual, interdisciplinary, all-college conferences dealing with foundational issues, and promoting interdisciplinary initiatives among faculty. The position is projected, subject to enrollment, to grow to full-time within three years, when the person would assume additional normal teaching and research duties in one of the disciplines in the current curriculum.</p> <p>Preference will be given to candidates with degrees in history, theology, education, political science, economics, or business. Research is required of all faculty. Support of the University College's Christian Statement of Faith and Mission Statement is required. In accordance with Canadian immigration regulations, this advertisement is addressed first to Canadian citizens and permanent residents. The College encourages all qualified female and male applicants to apply, including visible minorities. Deadline: May 15, 1999. Starting date: July 1, 1999. Starting half-time salary: \$18,300 and up with generous benefit plan.</p> <p>Send application letter, curriculum vitae, copies of transcripts, and three letters of reference to</p> <p>Dr. S. Keith Ward, Vice President Academic The King's University College 9125 - 50 St., Edmonton, AB T6S 2H3 Phone: (780) 465-8304 e-mail: skward@kingsu.ab.ca Web: www.kingsu.ab.ca</p> |

Classifieds

Attention Retired and/or traveling ministers. Beautiful Victoria, Vancouver Island, B.C. First CRC will be vacant as of July 1, and could use your services for an extended period of time beginning in July. This could be an opportunity meant for you. If you are interested, please write the church at:

651 Agnes St.
Victoria, BC V8Z 2E7
Fax: (250) 479-5124
E-mail: the clerk at
HNienhuis@yahoo.com

**The 500 members of
Bethel CRC of
Newmarket, Ontario
are searching for a
PASTOR**

who shares our passion for preaching and encouraging one another. We recently added a full-time youth worker to our team. A church profile, which was established during our congregational retreat, is available on request.

Please contact us:

**Bethel Christian
Reformed Church**

Attention: Albert Suk,
Planning and Search
Committee

333 Davis Drive,
Newmarket, ON L3Y 2N6
phone: 905-895-8341 fax:
905-895-0894

Our prayers are with you.

**Highlands Youth for
Christ
is seeking a**

Full Time Director
for its Drop In Centre
"The Door"

located in Alliston, Ontario. This position requires someone who is **experienced in ministry** to marginalized youth, but who also possesses **strong administrative skills**. The successful applicant will oversee the daily operations of the centre, be responsible for all community and church liaisons, supervision of staff and volunteers, and assist in fundraising endeavours.

This is a deputized position with a salary base provided.

Inquiries should be directed to:

Ministry Director
Box 21, Orangeville, ON
L9W 2Z5

The First Victoria Christian Reformed Church,
in the capital city of beautiful British Columbia,
is seeking a

FULL-TIME PASTOR

to begin as early as July 1999

to provide sound biblical preaching that has a motivating effect on the youth of today as well as the youth of yesterday. In addition, the pastor will provide leadership in worship, church education and pastoral care. The church consists of 243 professing, and 86 non-professing members, who enjoy a variety of worship expressions. Pastors interested in a potential call are encouraged to submit their resumes. A church profile is available. Please contact:

Gerry Ensing, Search Committee Chair
c/o First Christian Reformed Church

661 Agnes Street phone: 250-479-5124
Victoria, BC, V8Z 2E7 CANADA fax: 250-479-0899

"MIRRORING CHRIST, EMBRACING ALL"

Maple Ridge Christian Reformed Church,
in scenic south-west British Columbia, is seeking two new staff persons to help its members move in a new direction of focussed outreach and discipleship.

**ASSOCIATE
PASTOR**

Are you a motivating leader of leaders, able to work in the areas of youth and small groups? Do you have a passion for the lost? Are you able to assist in preaching? If so, we are interested in you.

**ASSOCIATE
MUSIC
DIRECTOR**

Do you have a heart for worship and a love of music that you can instill in others? Are you able to give direction to a variety of worship teams? Do you have strong musical skills? If so, we are interested in you. (part time position)

A church profile, including our recently adopted
Purpose and Vision Statements and Core Ministry Values,
and job descriptions are available from:

Kathy Smith, Search Committee
Maple Ridge CRC
20245 Dewdney Trunk Rd.
Maple Ridge, BC V2X 3C9

Phone and fax:
(604) 465-8436
e-mail:
bkssmith@bc.sympatico.ca

Houston Christian Reformed Church
in beautiful northwest British Columbia is seeking a
Full-Time Pastor

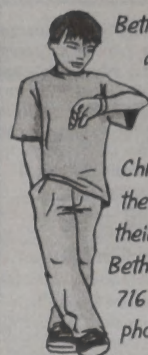
to provide sound biblical preaching, ministry to youth and pastoral care. The church membership stands at 67 families; which translates into 169 professing members and 154 non-professing or baptized members. Please send a copy of your profile. A church profile is available upon request. For more information, please contact:

Rick Delau, Search Committee,
Houston Christian Reformed Church
Box 6, Houston, BC V0J 1Z0
phone: 250-845-7756 fax: 250-845-7578

CHRIST COMMUNITY CHURCH OF VICTORIA
on Vancouver Island in southwestern B.C. is seeking a
Full-time Pastor - solo position.

CCC is one of two CRC churches in Victoria, with 128 professing members, many young families and an average worship attendance of 200. We emphasize friendship evangelism and contemporary worship with dynamic preaching. We have numerous youth and adult programs and an active ministry to the physically and mentally challenged. To correspond with us in confidence or to request an information package please contact:

Heidi DeGroot
4649 Boulderwood Dr., Victoria, BC V8Y 3G5
phone 250-658-0052, fax 250-727-9604,
or e-mail jddegroot@engr.uvic.ca

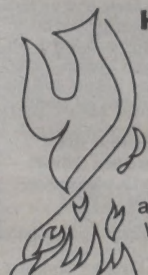


Bethel CRC of London, Ontario, is looking to fill
a part-time position for

Coordinator of Youth Ministry.

We are searching for a mature, professing
Christian with an ability to relate well to youth and
their parents. Interested individuals may direct
their inquiries and/or resume to:

Bethel CRC, c/o Eric Benjamins
716 Classic Dr., London, ON N5W 5V6
phone: 519-453-6565, fax: 519-453-1313



**HALF TIME YOUTH & EDUCATION
COORDINATOR POSITION**

Active youth ministry looking for strong leadership for church's youth programs. Congregation seeking direction for young people: strong relationship with Jesus Christ a necessity; musical appreciation and ability would be an asset.

We are an urban congregation of 135 families characterized as a loving church family which has recently implemented a small group ministry. If you see yourself meeting our needs and have academic qualifications and/or experience, please contact us.

Send your profile to
Grace CRC
255 Tweedsmuir Ave. W.,
P.O. Box 337
Chatham, ON N7M 5K4

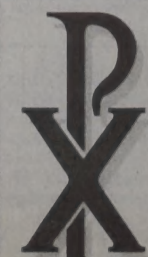
For a church profile or if you
have any questions contact
us by phone 519-436-1558,
fax 519-436-1558, or e-mail:
grace@ciaccess.com

Do you love Jesus? We do.

Full Time Youth Director

Bethel CRC of Lacombe, Alberta, is seeking a leader (new position) to expand and develop existing youth programs at the junior, senior and post high school levels, to nurture a love for Jesus and a desire to serve him among our youth.

Please direct inquiries and resumes to
Bethel Christian Reformed Church
c/o Jack Oudman, 5704 51 Ave,
Lacombe, AB T4L 1K8
phone 403-782-2667 fax 403-782-2542



GIFTED WITH YOUTH?

60% of our members are under the age of 29!
Neerlandia CRC is seeking to fill a new, full-time
YOUTH DIRECTOR position.

This will be a team ministry in a large rural church (100 families) in north-central Alberta. Experience preferred. Information package available on request. Contact:
Neerlandia CRC Search Committee
c/o Gene DeGroot
Box 182, Neerlandia, AB T0G 1R0

Phone: (780) 674-2017 Fax: (780) 674-6085 email: edegroot@telusplanet.net

Events/Classifieds

Calendar of Events

Items appearing in this column are run free of charge if they advertise an admission-free event or if they accompany a paid advertisement for the same event. The charge otherwise is \$7.50 per line, or \$2.50 per 1/3 line, per insertion.

- May 12** "Praise Him" and "Liberation Choir" at Ebenezer CRC, Trenton, Ont., 7:30 p.m. (See ad.) (#)
May 14 "Praise Him" and "Liberation Choir" at Cathedral of St. Catharine of Alexandria, St. Catharines, Ont., 8 p.m. (See ad.) (#)
May 15 "Praise Him" and "Liberation Choir" at Yorkminster Park Baptist Church, Toronto, Ont., 8 p.m. (See ad.) (#)
May 15 Dedication Service, Essex CRC, 276 Talbot St. S., Essex, Ont., 1:30 p.m. (See under event.) (#)
May 18 "Praise Him" at Chalmers United Church, Woodstock, Ont. At 8 p.m. (See ad.) (#)
May 19 "Praise Him" and "Liberation Choir" at Gordon Alcott Memorial Arena, Hwy. 7, Georgetown, Ont., at 7:30 p.m. (See ad.) (#)
May 21-23 Reformed Engaged Encounter, Fingal, Ont. (See ad for more information.) (#)
June 9 Hollandse Dag, 10:00 a.m., Moorefield Community Centre. (See ad) (#)
June 13 Dutch Service, Rev. Peter Egmond, Ancaster CRC, Hwy. 53, Ancaster, Ont., 3 p.m. (#)
July 25 Dutch Service, Rev. Jacob Kuntz, Ancaster CRC, Hwy. 53, Ancaster, Ont., 3 p.m. (#)

Celebrating God's Faithfulness

50th Anniversary

AYLMER CHRISTIAN REFORMED CHURCH

1949 - May 28, 29, 30 - 1999

Friday, May 28, 7:00 p.m.
Banquet for Present and Former Members at Saxonia Hall. Tickets: \$20.00
 Contact Minnie Hiemstra at 519-765-4673

Saturday, May 29, 11:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m.
 Family Activities in Church Yard

Sunday, May 30, 10:00 a.m. and 7:00 p.m.
 Worship Services

A Golden Anniversary Book will be printed and available before year end 1999. Cost: \$25.00 (includes mailing). Contact Marie Booy at 519-765-1739.

194 South Street West
 Aylmer, ON N5H 1S3
 phone 519-773-3025
 fax 519-773-3043

REFORMED ENGAGED ENCOUNTER

May 21 - 23, 1999

Fingal, Ontario

"A wedding is a day,
 a marriage is a lifetime"

FOR INFORMATION CALL:

Syl and Karen Gerritsma (905-935-6875) or
 Jason and Brenda Boks (905-957-4505)

TO REGISTER CALL:

Michael and Natsschia Wielink (905-774-3561)

Camp Norland

Summer Kamp for Kids

Located in beautiful Northern Ontario between Sudbury and North Bay, Camp Norland provides a Bible based camp program for kids grades 2 to 10+ throughout July and August. For more information call toll free

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 Burlington, ON L7R 3Y8

IN CONCERT

"Praise Him" & "Liberation Choir"

Wednesday, May 12, 7:30 p.m. Trenton, Ont.

Choir concert: "PRAISE HIM" from Holland conducted by Martin Zonnenberg, at the organ Martin Mans. Ebenezer Christian Reformed Church, 18 Fourth Ave., Trenton. For info: 613-392-5867 or 613-475-6197. Admission: adults \$10, children 12 and under \$5. Tickets at the door only.

Friday, May 14, 8:00 p.m. St. Catharines, Ont.

Choir concert: "PRAISE HIM" from Holland conducted by Martin Zonnenberg & "LIBERATION CHOIR" conducted by Willem van Suydam. Soloist Colleen Greidanus, organist Martin Mans. Audience participation! Cathedral of St. Catherine of Alexandria, 67 Church St., St. Catharines. Admission: adults \$10, children 12 and under \$5. Tickets at the door. Doors open at 7 p.m.



Saturday, May 15, 8:00 p.m. Toronto, Ont.

Choir concert: "PRAISE HIM" from Holland conducted by Martin Zonnenberg & "LIBERATION CHOIR" conducted by Willem van Suydam. Soloist Colleen Greidanus, organist Martin Mans. Experience the excitement of the recording of a live CD! Audience participation. Yorkminster Park Baptist Church, 1585 Yonge St., Toronto. Admission: \$15, tickets in advance \$12.50. Tickets on sale now!!!! Send self-addressed stamped envelope and cheque payable to: The Music Group, 5205 Harvester Rd. Unit #2, Burlington, ON L7L 6B5 or ask any Liberation Choir member. Doors open at 7:00 p.m. Seating not guaranteed after 7:45 p.m.

Tuesday, May 18, 8:00 p.m. Woodstock, Ont.

Choir concert: "PRAISE HIM" from Holland conducted by Martin Zonnenberg, at the organ Martin Mans. Chalmers United Church, 15 Vansittart Ave., Woodstock. Admission: adults \$10, children 12 and under \$5. Tickets at the door only. Doors open at 7:00 p.m.

Wednesday, May 19, 7:30 p.m. Georgetown, Ont.

Choir concert: "PRAISE HIM" from Holland conducted by Martin Zonnenberg & "LIBERATION CHOIR" conducted by Willem van Suydam. Soloist Colleen Greidanus, at the organ Martin Mans. Gordon Alcott Memorial Arena, Hwy #7, Georgetown. Admission: adults \$10, children 12 and under \$5. Tickets at the door. Doors open at 6:30 p.m.

The Christian Labour Association of Canada

has two possible openings as the result of growth and expansion plans. We invite male and female applicants for the position of:

REPRESENTATIVE TRAINEE

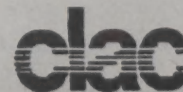
CLAC offers this challenging career opportunity by undertaking to train the successful applicants in labour relations and workplace representation work.

Applicants will be assessed on their confidence in dealing with people, verbal and written communication skills, Christian perspective and ability to deal effectively with conflict situations.

One of the possible openings concerns our Chatham, ON, office. The other may involve eventual placement in Winnipeg, MN, after an initial training period in one of our offices in either Surrey, BC, Calgary or Edmonton, AB, or Grimsby, Mississauga or Chatham, ON.

The letter of application, together with your resume and references, is to be addressed to:

Ed Grootenboer, Executive Director
 5920 Atlantic Drive
 Mississauga, ON L4W 1N6
 Phone: (905) 670-7383
 Fax: (905) 670-8416
 email: egrootenboer@clac.ca



Successful applicants will be required to sign CLAC's Code of Conduct as a condition of employment. All applications will be held in confidence. CLAC provides a competitive salary and excellent benefits.

News

Religious houses offer unique lodging

Alan Doerksen

BLOOMFIELD, N.J. — For travellers seeking inner peace as well as an inexpensive place to stay, religious houses are a good choice, according to Col. James Hughes. A retired U.S. Army Reserve School commandant, Hughes recently wrote "Overnight or Short Stay at Religious Houses Around the World," a directory of 2,200 religious places to stay around the world.

In the coming months, North American travellers of many faiths will sleep in a religious house for the first time. Those in the stop-the-world-I-want-to-get-off mode may withdraw to a retreat house for a private retreat of three or more days of emotional peace, mental review, physical rest or spiritual renewal. Others might stay at a religious guest house while visiting local places of

interest. Some religious groups conduct both retreat and guest ministries, says Hughes.

Hundreds of these accommodations are found throughout Canada, the U.S. and Mexico. They include former family homes of the famous, such as that of William Randolph Hearst in California and writer Sinclair Lewis in Massachusetts.

There are also religious houses for such purposes within walking distance of St. Peter's in Rome, two blocks from Victoria Station in London (England), and high in the Himalayas, at Kathmandu, Nepal. Rooms are usually modest but attractively furnished, immaculately clean, with private, shared or down the hall baths, Hughes explains.

Hughes has stayed at religious houses in countries such as England, Ireland and Italy. In Novem-

ber 1998, he spent five days in Dublin for \$30 (US), including breakfast and dinner.

Once, he and his late wife, Victoria, were the only guests at the 15th century Monastery of Certosa Di Pavia, just south of Milan, Italy, for four days. They had meals with the sister-cook in her kitchen.

Listings in Hughes directory include the type of ministry of a religious house, the religious sponsor, city, address and telephone number. The directory is available for \$23.95 (US), which includes postage, from Hugen Press, P.O. Box 2286, Bloomfield, NJ 07003.



The interior courtyard of the Di Pavia Monastery near Milan, Italy.

Judge dismisses Procter & Gamble defamation lawsuit against Amway

SALT LAKE CITY, Utah (EP) — A U.S. federal judge dismissed a lawsuit accusing the Amway Corporation and a Utah salesman of defamation for spreading rumors linking Procter & Gamble with the Church of Satan.

Procter & Gamble has been battling the Satanism rumors since at least 1981, and has filed lawsuits against individuals who spread such rumors. In 1995 the company sued Amway distributor Randy L. Haugen for allegedly spreading

rumors about Procter & Gamble through an Amway voice mail system. Amway was later added to the lawsuit as a defendant. Amway is based in Grand Rapids, Mich., and was begun by Christian Reformed Church members Richard De Vos and Jay Van Andel.

On March 26, U.S. District Judge Dale A. Kimball in Salt Lake City dismissed the suit, ruling the rumors of Satanist ties did not constitute defamation, and that Procter & Gamble had failed

to show specific damages.

Procter & Gamble will appeal the Utah ruling, and is continuing with a similar lawsuit in Houston, also involving Amway.

"We have been fighting this outrageous rumor for over 15 years. Throughout that time, people associated with Amway have played a role," said Procter & Gamble General Counsel James J. Johnson. "Over the years we have had numerous incidents linking the spread of the rumor to

Amway distributors."

Johnson added, "Amway competes directly with Procter & Gamble in a number of our product lines, and some Amway distributors have used this rumor to encourage a consumer boycott of P&G products."

One of the most prevalent rumors linking Procter & Gamble to Satanism says that the company's former corporate logo, a bearded man on the moon with stars, was a satanic symbol. Another rumor says that the president of Procter & Gamble appeared on television with Phil Donahue to promote devil worship; no such program was ever taped.

Procter & Gamble has answered almost 200,000 calls and letters about these false rumors. Prominent religious leaders and organizations have condemned the rumors, including the Billy Graham Evangelistic Association, Jerry Falwell, the Southern Baptist Convention and the National Association of Evangelicals.

News Digest

Male seahorses are mothers

CHICAGO — Sea horses have the distinction of being the only animal in which males have the babies. Kurt Stephenson of Chicago's Shedd Aquarium explains that the female sea horse deposits her eggs in a pouch on the male's abdomen, where they are fertilized, reports the *Toronto Star*. In the pouch, the fertilized eggs exchange material with the father, much the same way human babies get nutrients in the mother's womb.

This miracle of nature is featured in a video presented at the aquarium for tourists, and it proves to be a show-stopper every time, Stephenson says. "People just stand there mesmerized. They say, 'I can't believe it, the males have the babies.' I constantly hear that 'it's about time!' especially from the women. The larger species of seahorses give birth to 300 to 400 offspring; the smaller types have about 10 each.

Jungle pharmacies

ECUADOR (Religion Today) — A chain of pharmacies is opening in the jungles of Ecuador. Brunswick, Georgia-based MAP International is supplying the "satellite mini-pharmacies" as part of its Esmeraldas Province Project. The pharmacies will serve about 5,000 people in 15 communities. Missionaries say they hope to use the medical outreach to demonstrate the love of Christ. Many die from illnesses such as malaria, snakebites, and anemia that could be cured with proper medical help.

Mormons ban e-mail

SALT LAKE CITY, Utah — The Mormon church says missionaries may not use e-mail and faxes to communicate with family and friends back home. Communication with their families has always been controlled by the church in an effort to keep missionaries, usually young adults, focussed on their work, reports the *Toronto Star*. The convenience of e-mail puts missionaries over the allowable limit of one letter per week.

The Staff of
Christian Courier
with this, our 1999 Vacation Issue,
wishes you a "wonder"ful vacation,
full of joy
in God's beautiful creation,
in the loving fellowship of friends and family,
and in the blessings of rest and relaxation.



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